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REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE FOR THE PROVINCE OF PUERTO PLATA
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: A TOURISM PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR
THE TOWNS OF SAN FELIPE DE PUERTO PLATA AND SOSÚA

by

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A project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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Logan, Utah

2013

of the country. The province was one of the first territories of America in which Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492.

Previous planning initiatives have been carried out in the province however on a relatively small scale. One of these earlier planning initiatives, carried out by the Consejo Nacional de Asuntos Urbanos/ CONAU (National Council of Urban Affairs), developed a series of policies for the proper urban development of the capital of the province, the town of San Felipe de Puerto Plata. This thesis found that in order to fulfill the economic demands of the region, and to better integrate the existing resources of the province, a large-scale planning approach needs to be developed in both San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa because the majority of the natural, cultural, and historical resources of Puerto Plata are found within these towns, and also because these municipalities are considered key contributors to the overall economy of the province.

The current tourism development of the province has been threatened by a lack of proper management of the existing resources. Therefore there is the need of protecting the existing cultural heritage of the province while meeting the present and future tourism demands. This thesis examines the potential for a regional planning initiative to help the tourism development of Puerto Plata. As a result, and based in best management practices of tourism planning initiatives from similar cultural and spatial backgrounds, a regional tourism planning framework together with a set of recommendations are proposed for the development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Regional planning initiative for the province of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic
Ana A. Báez Sarita

The Dominican Republic has locations rich in cultural, historical, and ecological assets. One of these places is the province of Puerto Plata. Located in the northern region of the country, Puerto Plata was one of the first territories of America in which Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492. Built in the year of 1494 because of the second Spanish expedition arrival, La Isabela, the first new world's Spanish village represents one of the many vital historical components of the province of Puerto Plata.

The country has an economy largely based in the service sector. According to the U.S. Department of State, in the Dominican Republic, services contributed to a 64.7% of the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (2011 est.). More than 60% of the labor force relates to the service sector (2005 est.) making this the most important income source of the Dominican Republic's economy.

The service industry is fitted by the sectors of commerce, communications, tourism, and transportation. Among these service sectors the tourism industry has been the main income receiver, with US \$2 billion dollars, a direct employment of 50,000, and an indirect employment of 110,000 people (United Nations Statistics Division, 2000).

The province of Puerto Plata holds more than 100,000 hotel beds, which represents an enormous potential for the tourism sector and the overall economic development of the region. Puerto Plata is a vital provider of the tourism-based economy of the country. However, this economic model still needs to develop a better integration of the recreational and historical resources of the province thus there is still much untapped potential to be developed in Puerto Plata's tourism industry. At the same time, the existing condition of the province is so unkempt, that secluded and isolated projects won't be able to make the sizeable change that is needed to revitalize the province, which is why a regional planning initiative is necessary to help change, both the social and economical aspects of the province.

Previous planning initiatives have been carried out in the province however on a relatively small scale. One of these earlier planning initiatives, carried out by the Consejo Nacional de Asuntos Urbanos/ CONAU (National Council of Urban Affairs), recommended a series of policies for the proper urban development of the capital of the province, the town of San Felipe de Puerto Plata. This thesis found that in order to fulfill the economic demands of the region, and to better integrate the existing resources of the province, a large-scale planning approach needs to be developed in both San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa because the majority of the natural and historical resources of Puerto Plata are found within these towns, and also because these municipalities are considered key contributors to the overall economy of the province.

The current tourism development of the province has been threatened by a lack of proper management of the existing resources. Therefore there is the need of protecting

the existing cultural heritage of the province while meeting the present and future tourism demands.

Regional Planning is a field that helps develop a proficient placement of the infrastructures and land-use areas of a territory in order to develop a sustainable growth of a given region. For this reason, this thesis examines the potential for a regional planning initiative to help the tourism development of Puerto Plata. As a result, and based in best management practices of tourism planning initiatives from similar cultural and spatial backgrounds, a regional tourism planning framework together with a set of recommendations are proposed for the future development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

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Ana A. Báez Sarita

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Puerto Plata is located in the northern region of the Dominican Republic. Considered a very popular destination, the province provides lots of opportunities for outdoor recreation due to its exceptional beaches, historical sites, and mountain systems. Figure 1 shows the map of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean context, and Figure 2 shows the province of Puerto Plata in the context of the Dominican Republic.

Several sites of importance and relevance of the cultural heritage of the nation are within the province of Puerto Plata. To name a few, the village of La Isabela, which was the first formal European settlement of the new world, is located on the northwestern section of the province, the San Felipe Fort, a 16th century structure that once served for the protection of the coast is located in the capital of the province, and a 1879 lighthouse that guided the Atlantic sea ship routes, are some of the crucial heritage sites of the province.

The service sector is one of the main contributors to the economy of the Dominican Republic. According to the U.S.. Department of State, in the year of 2011, services contributed to a 64.7% of the GDP of the country. Since 2005 more than 60% of the labor force relates to the service sector making it a vital income source of the Dominican Republic's economy. The service sector includes the commerce, communications, tourism, and transportation industries. In the Dominican Republic, the tourism industry employs approximately 160,000 people both directly in hotel-related jobs and indirectly in activities such as tour guiding and transportation.



Figure 1. Map of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean context (graphic developed by the author).

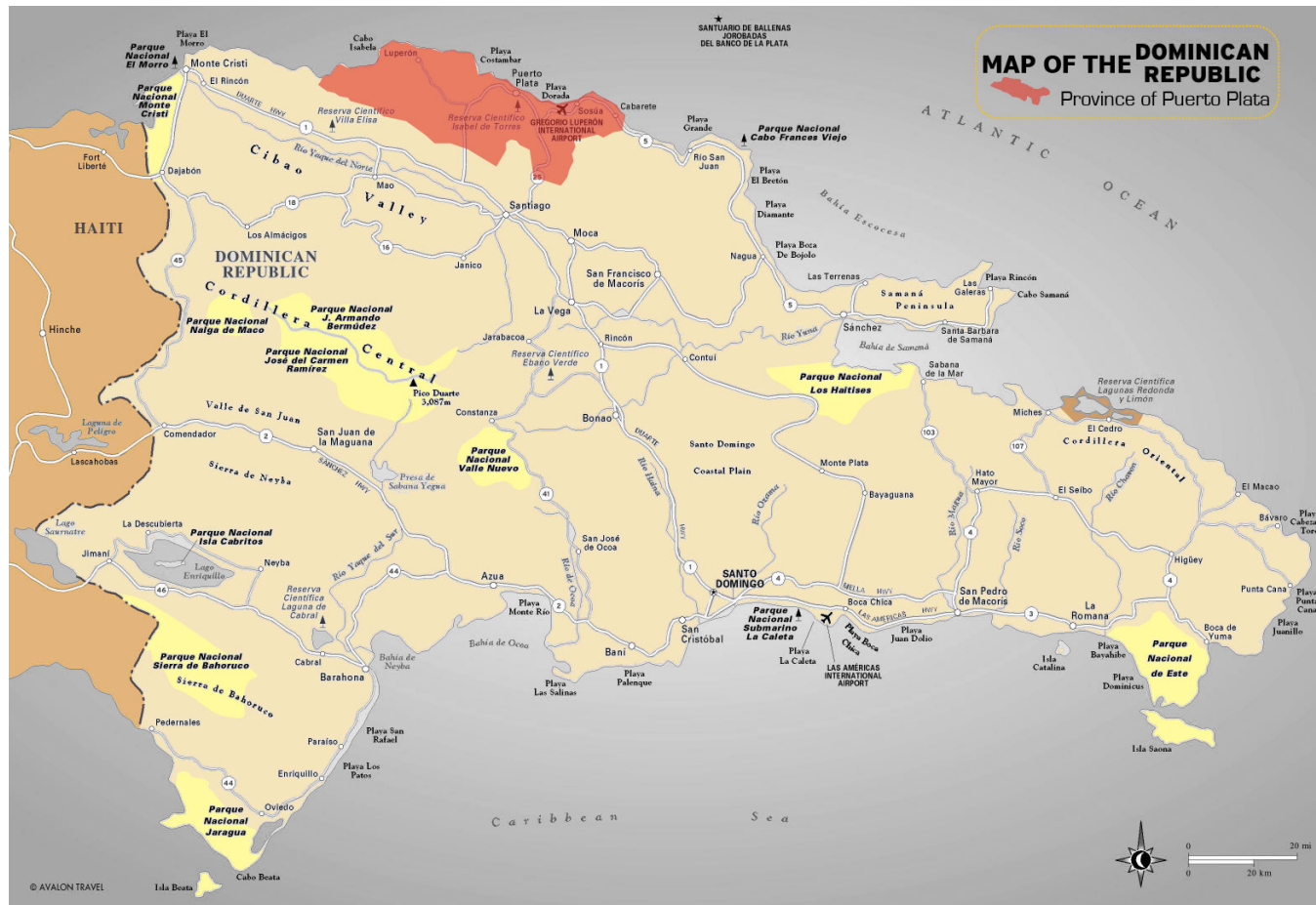


Figure 2. Map of the province of Puerto Plata in the context of the Dominican Republic (graphic developed by the author).

The tourism sector is one of the key income revenue generators of the province of Puerto Plata. According to the Oficina Nacional de Estadística/ONE (National Office of Statistics), the majority of jobs in Puerto Plata are in the service sector; a total of 124,976 people are actively working, and 23,471 of these jobs are in the tourism and commerce industry (2002 est).

In terms of population, the province of Puerto Plata, with an average of 457,600 acres (715 square miles), had approximately 332,295 people in 2002. This population was distributed into nine municipalities; Altamira, Guananico, Imbert, Los Hidalgos, Luperón, Sosúa, Villa Isabela, Villa Montellano and the capital of the province San Felipe de Puerto Plata.

Both Sosúa and San Felipe de Puerto Plata are currently the municipalities with the higher amount of population, and with the highest percentage of the workforce of the province. The majority of these jobs are in tourism related activities. In 2002, for example, San Felipe de Puerto Plata had an estimated population of 147,963 people; 60,536 were actively working, and 12,394 (20%) of these jobs were in the tourism and commerce industry. In Sosúa the estimated population was 44,938 people; 18,532 of these people worked actively, and 4,424 (23%) of these jobs were related to the tourism and commerce industry (ONE, 2002). Figure 3 shows the population of the province of Puerto Plata.

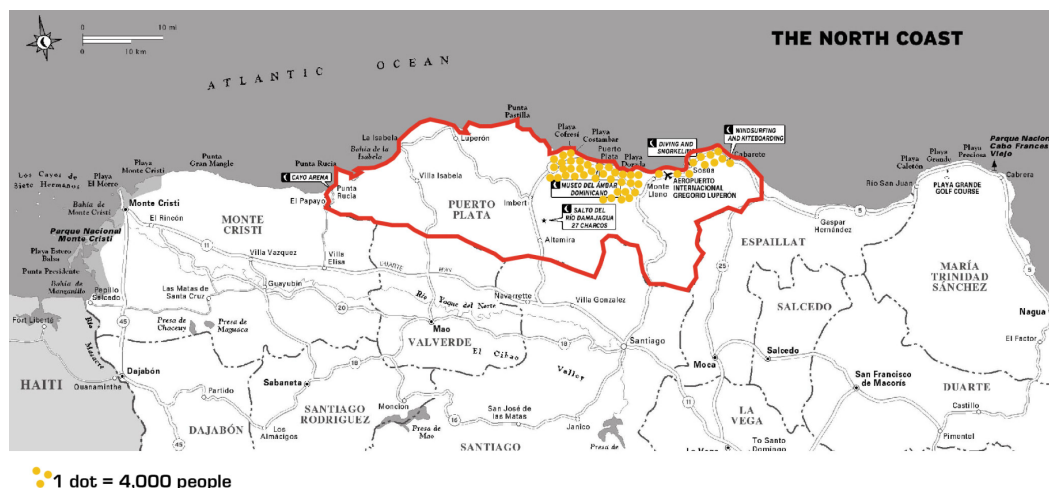


Figure 3. Population of Puerto Plata.

As mentioned previously the province has had an economy largely based in the tourism sector, however, since 2001, a considerable reduction of international visitors has occurred. In the year of 2000 the number of international visitors was 609,752, followed by a total of 471,085 in 2001. In 2011, the number of visitors declined substantially to a total of 367,867 international visitors (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2012). This drastic decline of visitors had led to serious concerns for the ongoing jobs demand of the province.

None of the organizations further elaborate into the causes of this issue; however, it is possible that this tourism decline occurs either because the majority of Puerto Plata's international visitors come from Europe, and therefore the economy's downturn of some of the European countries has affected the international visitors that Puerto Plata receives annually, or because of the increasing competition of other Caribbean islands such as Grenada, and Guadeloupe.

Another aspect that could potentially be the cause of the tourism decline of the province is the tradition of developing small-scale tourism plans that barely include the significantly relevant historic and natural resources of the province, which means that tourists rarely know that these exist, therefore they never get the chance to really be aware and understand the cultural and ecological richness of the province.

As mentioned before, small-scale planning efforts have been developed in the province. A notable work, *Lineamiento de Políticas de Desarrollo Urbano para la ciudad de Puerto Plata* (Urban Development Guidelines for the City of Puerto Plata), carried out by the CONAU in the year of 2000, is a detailed analysis of the various aspects of city of Puerto Plata. The results of this work were a series of recommendations for the proper urban development of the capital of the province, the town of San Felipe de Puerto Plata.

To build up for a sustainable tourism, Puerto Plata needs to raise awareness of its historical sites and its natural resources for these to become integral components of the future tourism development of the province. For these reasons, the main objective of this thesis is to provide a planning framework for the future tourism development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

Several elements associated with tourism initiatives are identified in the literature of this research. After analyzing the diverse concepts and terminologies, six tourism and regional planning related case studies are also part of the methodology of this thesis because they offer valuable insight from successful planning initiatives throughout the world. All these previous steps helped in providing an outline for the planning framework and recommendations of this thesis.

The final outcome of this thesis is to provide a framework, which includes specific and large scale planning proposals and recommendations. These proposals would help in the development of any future tourism planning initiatives for the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa in the province of Puerto Plata.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is plenty of literature that covers a wide range of information in the planning field, the literature that supports tourism as a model of economic development, and planning as the process that will achieve the tourism-model goals, is still not very popular. For this reason, the themes of regional planning, tourism planning, and sustainable tourism planning are defined in the literature for these were found in many of the successful tourism-planning initiatives throughout the world, and therefore these were considered to be vital for the development of this thesis.

Regional Planning

In order to comprehend the concept of regional planning one must define the capacity and limitation of the planning field. Planning, regional or otherwise, is a basic human activity. Uniquely among species, human beings have been endowed with the abilities to think about the future, and create strategies for choosing and advancing those futures (Seltzer & Carbonell, 2011). In essence regional planning is an important component of the planning and development field because it deals with the design and placement of the infrastructure needs of a determined area, such as the road, the building, and/or the water infrastructure systems.

Capacity and Limitation of Regional Planning

There is a long history of attempts to address the needs of regions. In Australia, for example, ineffectual regional governance arrangements, and the lack of decentralized authority, have represented a barrier for the regional planning. Furthermore, Paul Collits argues that regional planners deal with difficulties in the breadth and depth of regional governance (Thompson, 2007).

Some of the common difficulties that regional planners encounter are first, that there is often no agreement over regional boundaries, although different regional boundaries exist for diverse policy purposes in the different sectors; second, that there is a marked lack of integration between economic development and environmental and social planning frameworks for regions within levels of government; and third, that there still remains a culture of blame shifting between state and federal levels of government.

Regional Planning Practice and Local Governance

The regional planning practice often involves regional and local development policies. Collits describes that strategies such as a bottom-up approach with an emphasis on economically sustainable development, and a strong focus on community capacity and change management have transformed the process of the regional policy formulation and implementation in the development planning of a territory (Thompson, 2007).

Regional planning can either be developed at a sub-national or a multinational level. A multinational regional planning consists of planning for an economic region that stretches over the boundaries of more than one country while sub-national regional

planning may imply planning for a set of regions in a country or the allocation of projects in such a way that the economic disparities among regions of a country may be reduced. It is within this scope that regional planning can be defined as the effort to attain the best possible spatial pattern of development, to solve the problems of the sub-national areas, and to insert their plans into the overall national development plan of a country (Tosum & Jenkins, 1996).

Within the sub-national regional planning, both the national, and the local planning are found. National planning essentially relates to the development of each region to the progress of the national economy, and local planning is the one that attempts to relate the whole urban or rural region to the developments within each local part of it. Regional planning is then the link between national and local development planning (Friedmann, 1963), which is why no local planning effort can meaningfully address local concerns without understanding and acting on them in a regional context (Seltzer & Carbonell, 2011).

Regional planners are key entities to the thoughtful development of the policies of a region; they understand how a region should grow in order to guarantee a balanced development in the diverse aspects of the community or municipality, and they evaluate the costs and the implementation of the determined plan.

Regional planning, however, can be challenging, and the relationship between planning and politics may represent difficulties in the management practices of a plan. In the book *Planning Australia*, Peter Williams describes the challenges of the decision making process of planning in Australia, and the centralization of local government

functions. However, in Australia, new forms of urban planning, development, and infrastructure provision are challenging the traditional structures of urban governance. A reconfiguration of the roles of the various interest groups involved in urban governance has occurred, lending more power to state government and private interests at the expense of local government and community interests (Thompson, 2007).

Achieving a balance between the public policies outcomes and the public consultation and participation processes is likely to be an ongoing challenge for both the governance and the planning field (Thompson, 2007). The lessons learned with the case of Australia are that the planning policies need to be included into the local governance scope as part of the decision-making process. At the same time, the regional planning initiatives of a territory need to be public and participatory in order to properly answer the objectives of the community.

Tourism Planning

Tourism plays an important role in today's cities economic and social development policies. Referred as the world largest industry, tourism has been recognized as a growing sector in nearly every nation worldwide. Few countries do not promote themselves as destinations as a way of gaining a share of the ever-increasing global tourism market (Sharples & Telfer, 2002). However, the lack of inclusion of the tourism industry in the policy making and planning development processes easily leads to the degradation of the environment mainly due to the impacts that the human activity causes in the natural environment (Thompson, 2007).

A variety of literature addresses the socioeconomic process of tourism in isolation from other socioeconomic sectors and processes; the implication is that tourism represents a panacea to the challenges of underdevelopment. However, it is certainly unrealistic to expect tourism as the solution to all the problems faced by developing countries, whilst the scale of tourism-related development also remains an unresolved issue (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

In the case of islands, for example, while they are different in terms of size and population, they often share characteristics of remoteness and mono-structured economies, limited natural resource endowments and dependence on imports. Many islands have thus sought to diversify their economies towards other activities generating foreign exchange earnings (Gössling, 2003). Consequently, tourism development has become the favored option to generate employment, income, and foreign exchange earnings, to initiate regional development, to finance infrastructure, and to restore and protect cultural sites (Apostolopoulos & Gayle, 2002).

Tourism as part of the comprehensive planning that is done for a specific geographic area could be developed at various levels. With each level focusing on a different degree of specificity, tourism planning should be prepared in sequence from the general to the specific, because general levels provide the framework and guidance for preparing specific plans. These various levels of tourism planning are classified in seven categories (Inskeep, 1991):

- International planning level
- National planning

- Regional planning
- Sub-regional planning
- Development area land use planning
- Facility site planning, and
- Facility design

In the document *Tourism planning: An integrated and sustainable development approach*, Edward Inskeep describes how in the international planning level the cooperation of the different countries is crucial, hence the importance of receiving encouragement from international agencies through their sponsorship of regional tourism projects (Inskeep, 1991). A good example of this type of international cooperation towards a regional tourism development is the Mayan Road, an archaeological route that encompasses the countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Figure 4 shows the existing Maya archaeological sites (Berman, 2011).

In the national planning level of tourism, several elements are taken into account:

- Tourism policy;
- A physical structure plan including identification of major tourist attractions, designation of tourism development regions, international access points and the internal transportation network of facilities and services;
- Types and quality level of accommodation and other tourist facilities and services required;
- Major tour routes in the country and their regional connections;
- Education and training programs;

- Facility development and design standards;
- Socio-cultural, environmental, and economic considerations and impact analysis;
- Tourism marketing strategies and promotion programs; and
- National level implementation techniques

In the case of regional tourism planning, the level of development is specific to a region of a country, and it is mostly elaborated within the structure of a national tourism policy. Regularly these regional tourism planning initiatives focus on different elements such as:

- Regional policy;
- Regional access and the internal transportation network of facilities and services;
- Type and location of tourist attractions;
- Location of tourism development areas including resorts areas;
- Amount, type, and location of tourist accommodation and other tourist facilities and services;
- Regional level environmental, socio-cultural, and economic considerations and impacts analyses;
- Regional level education and training programs;
- Marketing strategies and promotion programs;
- Implementation techniques including staging of development, project programming, and regional zoning regulations.

Eventhough the level of regional tourism planning is more specific than the level of national planning, the degree of specificity will depend on the size of the region. In a small country, the national plan may be at the same level of detail as a regional plan in a larger country, and small countries may not need both national and regional planning (Inskeep, 1991).

As Inskeep illustrates, sub-regional planning is more specific than the regional level of planning. However, this level of planning is not as detailed as the development area or resort land use planning, which focus in areas designated for integrated tourist resorts, resort towns, and urban tourism. The component of the sub-regional plan will depend on the situation of the sub-region, but typically would include tourist attraction features, general location of accommodation, facilities and services, access to the sub-region, its internal transportation network, and relevant institutional factors (Inskeep, 1991).

Tourism in the regional, and sub-regional planning scope will be partially covered in this thesis for they describe important aspects that ought to be included in the future tourism development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa within the province of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic.

Tourism as a Development Tool in Developing Countries

The relationship between tourism and development can be very complex. Tourism is frequently justified on the basis of its potential contribution to economic development. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) asserts that tourism can help

eliminate the economic gap between developed and developing countries and regions for it assures a social and economic development (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

The importance of the tourism industry in the developing countries is certainly its big contribution into the economic development of the nation. It is for this reason that many of these countries consider tourism to be a vital ingredient in the overall development of their plans and policies (Dieke, 1989).

For many developing countries, tourism has become one of the principal sources of foreign exchange earnings. A good example is represented with the case of Gambia, a country with limited industrial sectors and limited natural resources as well. The country was able to take advantage of the European winter-sun tourism market, creating an approximate of 7000 jobs directly and indirectly related to the tourism sector (Thompson, O'Hare, & Evans, 1995).

In the case of the Dominican Republic, a country rich in natural resources that historically has had an economy largely based in agriculture, the tourism industry contributed US \$2 billion dollars to the economy of the country (2000 est.). In the Dominican Republic about 160,000 of the workforce were employed directly and indirectly in the tourism sector. Although the agriculture still remains as the primary industry of the Dominican Republic accounting for 11% of the GDP, the tourism industry is the leading and biggest revenue earner within the service sector.

While attention is most frequently focused in the role of the tourism in the developing countries, its potential to contribute to economic growth is primarily linked to the amount of investment that the government or local authorities invest in it. In this

context Richard Sharpley points out that in Western Europe, there has long been evidence of national government support of the tourism sector (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002), hence tourism has become a major component of the economic strategies (Williams & Shaw, 1991). The case should not be different in the developing world, and government support must become an important component of the tourism development of these nations.

However, a tourism development model does not necessarily eliminate the economic gap that exists between the developed and the less developed regions. In the Caribbean, for example, where dependence on tourism has historically been high, despite revenues from tourism having reached US\$17 billion in 2000, unemployment peaked to 20% of the population in some of the islands, and the living standards fell drastically as well. These economic and social harms are not being exclusively attributed to tourism; however, this statement helps to understand that regions should not depend solely in the tourism industry (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

The local communities also play an important role in the field of tourism planning specially at the early stages of development. An active attitude must be taken by local governments to maintain a balance between local and external resource control in order to avoid a highly institutionalized tourism industry controlled by outside interests (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

In order to strategically develop a tourism plan, several components must be considered. Edward Inskeep develops a good description of these components as follows (Inskeep, 1988): Figure 5 shows the components of a tourism plan.

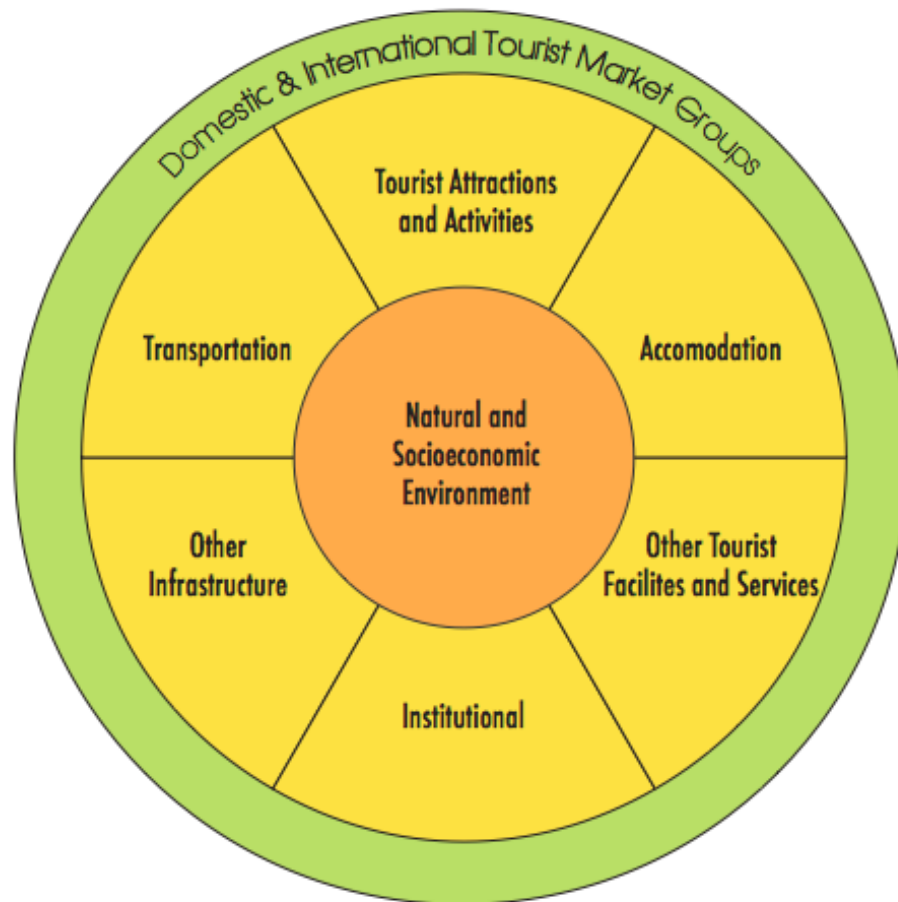


Figure 5. Components of a tourism plan.

- Tourist attractions and activities: All those natural, cultural, and special features and related activities that attract tourists to visit a specific area.
- Accommodation: Hotels and other types of facilities and their related services where tourists stay overnight during their travels.
- Other tourist facilities and services that support for tourism development. These include, for example, tour and travel operations.

- Transportation facilities and services: Transportation access into the country, region, or development area.
- Other infrastructures such as water supply, electric power, sewage and solid waste disposal, telecommunications, and in some cases drainage infrastructure.
- Institutional programs and policies: Planning and education and training programs, marketing strategies and promotion programs, public and private sector tourism organizational structures, tourism-related legislation and regulations, public and private sector investment policies, and economic, environmental, and socio-cultural programs and impact controls.

The environmental and social consequences must be considered in the context of tourism development and tourism planning as well. These consequences are the measurable, visible consequences of developing tourism in any particular destination, which means that tourism is only considered being successful as long as the benefits accruing from its development are not outweighed by the costs or negative consequences. But again, these consequences do not provide the justification or reason for choosing tourism, rather than any other industry or economic activity, as a route to development (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

The attraction to tourists of many countries or regions also lies in the natural resources that they provide. This principle suggests that the development of tourism is based upon their natural resources (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002), and that these types of developments are not created by the economic value derived from the resources. In the same context, historic sites and attractions that have been handed down by previous

generations may also be considered to be investment-free despite all the costs incurred in the protection and management of all tourist attractions and resources (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). Whether natural or man-made, the idea is that the existing resources of a region should favor the tourism as a model of development, and in that sense, the region should encompass the benefit from this natural systems or man-made infrastructures with the tourism industry.

Tourism and the Natural Environment

It has been previously discussed that while tourism has shown to greatly contribute the economic development of a region, it could also negatively impact the ecological aspects of a territory.

The main impact of the tourism industry on the natural environment is that it is often developed in environmentally fragile and vulnerable settings, such as on small islands, in coastal and marine areas, in mountainous, and alpine areas, in certain arid lands, and at archaeological and historical sites. The types and extent of environmental impact as well as socioeconomic impacts also relate closely to the type and intensity of tourism development that is undertaken (Inskip, 1991).

A good example of the importance of the relationship between tourism planning and the natural environment is the case of the Caribbean and the Pacific where the islands comprised in both regions have been highly dependent and affected by tourism. The Caribbean, for example, is the most tourism-dependent region in the world with over 25 per cent of all earnings being derived from tourism (Beller, Ayala & Hein, 1990).

According to the Banco Central Dominicano, in the case of the Dominican Republic, the number of visitors reached almost 3 million in the year of 2000, generating almost 15 per cent of the GDP. These tropical islands ecosystems are fragile, vulnerable and under increasing stress as a result of forces stemming from coastal development, use of coastal resources and global environmental change.

While tourism-related development processes in developing countries have been the subject of a range of publications, the relationship of politics and environment has seldom cooperation of governments with international organizations, as well as the consequences of such cooperation for the environment of local stakeholder groups have remained little analyzed (Gössling, 2003).

In the case of the Caribbean, the Caribbean Tourism Research and Development Center (CTO), an international agency, has structured several statements regarding the importance that tourism planning has in alleviating the negative impacts of the tourism practices in the natural environment. Some of the statements developed by the CTO described the importance of understanding that tourism is critical to the economic survival of the Caribbean, and that a proper development of a healthy tourism is perhaps the best method of ensuring the preservation of the Caribbean environment.

The importance of applying an environmental approach to tourism planning is that it can prevent environmental problems from arising in the first place. This type of planning requires detailed research and understanding of the environmental characteristics of the site. It is also essential that specific environmental assessments be made of the tourism projects and the environment, to ensure that no problems are being

generated. Therefore, in order to apply an environmental approach that truly assesses the environmental impacts, it is essential to comprehend the types of impacts as well as the ways in which they can be prevented or lessened (Inskeep, 1991).

The various types of negative or undesirable environmental impacts that can be generated by the tourism industry range from the pollution that it can create (Inskeep, 1991) in the natural environment, to the disruption of the ecological cycle, and to the damage of the archaeological and historic sites. On island ecosystems, for example, tourism is one of the major contributors to environmental change, often competing with traditional activities such as agriculture, wood harvesting, and fishing for scarce natural resources as land, fresh water, timber or marine edible species. Tourism-related changes of the physical environment also include land conversion for infrastructure development, such as airstrips, ports, roads, and accommodation establishments (Gössling, 2003).

Environmental changes can create or add on threats to island ecosystems. In the Caribbean, for instance, about 30 percent of the reefs are now reported to be at risk because runoff and sedimentation, as well as discharges of untreated municipal and hotel waste. However, these environmental changes may not always be as obvious as the example previously presented, which makes the application of environmental impact assessments difficult (Gössling, 2003).

Many of the impacts considered as negative forces for the natural environment are not unique to tourism. However, these need to be assessed for they influence directly the tourism development of a region. According to Inskeep, the main types of harmful tourism development impacts can be listed as follows (Inskeep, 1991):

1. Pollution

1.1. Water Pollution: If a proper sewage disposal system has not been installed for the different tourist facilities, ground water pollution may be manifested.

1.2. Air Pollution: Considered as a clean industry, tourism development can present excessive air pollution coming from the internal combustion system of vehicles. The air pollution is a critical issue where tourism development is not properly planned, developed, and landscaped.

1.3. Noise Pollution: Concentration of tourists, tourist road, and car or motorcycle tracks may reach uncomfortable levels of noise for locals and tourists.

1.4. Visual Pollution: Poorly designed hotels and other tourists facilities buildings, the use of unsuitable building materials, and the obstruction of scenic view are some of the sources of visual pollution created in tourism development.

2. Waste Disposal Problems: Improper disposal of solid waste from hotels, restaurants, and resorts can generate both litter and environmental health problems.

3. Ecological Disruption: Several types of ecological problems can result from uncontrolled tourism development and use. Overuse of fragile natural environments by tourists can lead to ecological damage (Inskeep, 1991).

4. Environmental Hazards: Poor land use planning and engineering design of tourist facilities can generate erosion, landslides, flooding, and other problems (Inskeep, 1991).
5. Damage to Historic Sites: Inskeep describes how the overuse or misuse of fragile archaeological and historic sites can lead to the damage of these features through excessive wear, vandalism, and so forth (Inskeep, 1991).
6. Land Use Problems: Tourist facilities may preempt land that is more valuable for other types of land uses, such as agriculture and parks, or land that should remain under conservation control measurements.

Conversely, the impacts of a tourism development approach can be positive, and can contribute to the ecological aspects of a region. As an example, Gössling describes how protected areas have become important tourist attractions in many tropical countries, increasing the interest of governments to safeguard ecosystems or to preserve areas in natural state (Gössling, 2003). As Alan T. White and Rina Rosales (2003) describe in the book *Tourism and Development in Tropical Islands*, tourism may be an alternative development option in cases where the environment is already under serious pressure as an option that can alleviate ecological problems. White and Rosales further explain the example of the Philippines, and how the country's coral reefs are utilized in various tourism-related activities that provide economic opportunities for income to be reinvested in coastal conservation management programs.

As previously described tourism can have great impact in the conservation of natural areas depending on how its development is planned and managed. If properly

planned and controlled, tourism help maintain and positively impact the environment in various ways; some of these positive impacts are described as follows (Inskeep, 1991):

1. Conservation of Important Natural Areas: Tourism can help justify and pay for conservation of important natural areas and development of parks and reserves, including the establishment of national and regional parks because they are attractions for tourists (Inskeep, 1991). In East Africa the great emphasis being placed on wildlife conservation that must include the animals habitat is mostly justified from the countries perspectives by the economic benefits from tourism for which wildlife is a major attraction (Burnett, Wesley & Conover, 1989).

2. Conservation of Archaeological and Historic Sites and Architectural Character: Tourism provides the incentive and helps pay for the conservation of archaeological and historic sites that might otherwise deteriorate or disappear. Much of the archaeological and historic preservation taking place in South and Southeast Asia can be economically justified because they provide attractions for tourists. In Sri Lanka the admission fees paid by tourists are used directly for archaeological research and conservation.

3. Improvement of Environmental Quality: Tourism can help provide the incentive for a good environmental quality. In the Mediterranean region for example, programs are being commenced to control pollution sources of the Mediterranean Sea because it is affecting the recreational use of the region.

4. Enhancement of the Environment: Development of well-designed tourist facilities may enhance rural or urban uninteresting landscape.
5. Improvement of Infrastructure: Local infrastructure of airports, roads, water, sewage and solid waste disposal systems, and telecommunications can be improved through the development of tourism, which uses and helps pay for the infrastructure, consequently leading to the reduction of pollution problems.
6. Increasing Environmental Awareness: Lastly, a good positive impact of tourism development is the potential of raising the awareness for the environment. In places where residents have limited concern about the natural environment and its conservation, observing tourists interest in nature can encourage local awareness (Inskeep, 1991).

As explained previously, tourism development could serve as a tool to embrace several social dimensions, specially the environmental dimension. Various authors agree with this statement; White and Rosales, for example, describe how tourism can provide income through entrance fees and donations, making the implementation of protected areas feasible from a financial point of view. Tourists may even be willing to pay substantial amounts of money over and above entrance fees in order to conserve the environment they have visited; Stefan Gössling and Oliver Hörstmeier explain how the opportunity to experience nature may foster general environmental interest and awareness (Gössling, 2003).

Furthermore, in some exceptional cases, the tourism industry may even lobby for stricter environmental legislation. David Weaver states how in the Cayman Islands, the

tourism industry often took the leadership role in the implementation of protected areas and environmental legislation which in some cases included building height restrictions, quotas on cruise ship passenger and regulations to protect coral reefs (Gössling, 2003).

Sustainable Tourism

All tourism should be developed in accordance with the principles of sustainability, for this matter it is fundamental to define the concept of sustainable tourism, and the difference that exists between ecotourism and sustainable tourism.

While ecotourism refers to the tourism based principally upon natural and archaeological resources, sustainable tourism is the type of tourism that attempts in making the lowest impact on the environment and the local culture while helping to produce potential employment for the local community (Hall & Lew, 1998).

The understanding of the concept of sustainability and its relationship with the region is crucial for the proper application of a tourism planning framework because even though the undesired impacts of tourism at a specific location may be reduced to such a level as to make them much less harmful to the human and physical environments, the full impacts of those tourism activities may occur not only in the destination but in other areas also, extending as far as the region (Hall & Lew, 1998).

In facing the upcoming environmental issues such as land and ecosystem degradation, species extinction, pollution, soil erosion, and deforestation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) in the year of 1980. The IUCN together with the

assistance of the United Nations Environment Education Program (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) created the WCS as a strategy that would help for the conservation of the earth's living resources. The strategy focused into three main objectives:

1. To maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems, on which human survival and development depend;
2. To preserve genetic diversity, on which depend the breeding programmes necessary for the protection and improvement of cultivated plants and domesticated animals, as well as much scientific advance, technical innovation, and the security of the many industries that use living resources;
3. To ensure the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems, which support millions of rural communities as well as major industries.

From the previously described objectives, this thesis considered important, and applicable to the context, the idea of maintaining a balance between the human development and the ecological processes. For this purpose, this idea will be included in the development of the planning framework of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

The WCS was largely assisted by the UNEP, the same organization that latter helped in the creation of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). The commission was created as a mean of encouraging the formulation of a sustainable development framework. In 1987 the WCED defined sustainable

development as the type of development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The main sustainability principles presented in this report were the following:

- i. The idea of holistic planning and strategy making;
- ii. The importance of preserving essential ecological processes;
- iii. The need to protect both human heritage and biodiversity;
- iv. To develop in such a way that productivity can be sustained over the long term for future generations; and
- v. Achieving a better balance of fairness and opportunity between nations.

The principles of sustainability, when properly applied to tourism development can also be cost effective and reduce costs. For example, when encouraging guests to conserve water by not requesting that all of the towels be washed each day, guests feel good because they understand they are making a positive contribution to the environment, which at the same time implies that the accommodation is committed in supporting sustainable principles (Hall & Lew, 1998).

Overall, sustainable tourism has become accepted as the type of tourism that is developed and operated in such a manner as to follow the principles of sustainable development. Described as appropriate and morally correct as well as being environmentally suitable, sustainable tourism has high appeal to tourists and to decision makers in the tourism industry, in both the public and private sectors. Nevertheless, even though the term of sustainability has been widely accepted and included into the

theory of planning, the implementation of the idea has been much less successful (Hall & Lew, 1998).

This thesis found extraordinary value in the previously described sustainable development principles created by the WCED because these principles would help in preserving the existing cultural heritage and the ecological systems of the region while decreasing the impact of the built environment. For these reasons, this thesis will incorporate the aspect of sustainability into the recommendations section of the proposed tourism planning framework for the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

CHAPTER III

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Dominican Republic has an economy largely based in the service sector. Within this sector the major service industry is the tourism industry, which is one of the milestones of the Dominican economy, contributing to the creation of nearly 160,000 jobs (2000 est.). The main type of tourism developed in the Dominican Republic is the recreational and vacation-based tourism (Pellerano & Herrera, 2003).

Accommodations

The country has the largest accommodation capacity in the Caribbean region with approximately 54,000 rooms (Table 1). Large all-inclusive resorts have dominated the tourism industry infrastructure. However, in the last years, hotel offer has diversified in order to reach different types of tourism such as ecological, adventure, and cultural tourism. For this reason there is a recent growing demand for a diversified tourist offer that allows the tourist to choose or to combine these options (Pellerano & Herrera, 2003).

Table 1
Dominican Republic Tourism Indicators.

	1999	2000	2001	G.R.% 00/99	G.R.% 01/00
Aggregated Value (in million RD\$)	329.30	450.00	430.40	14.7	-4.40
Number of rooms	49,623.00	51,916.00	53,964.00	4.6	3.90
Earnings (million US\$)	2,483.30	2,860.20	2,689.80	15.2	-6.00
Hotel Occupation Rate (%)	66.90	70.20	66.30	3.4	-3.90
Income Hotel Room Tax (mill. RD\$)	163.70	190.50	19.70	16.4	-89.70
Income Tourist Card (mill. RD\$)	330.60	385.60	366.20	16.6	-5.00
Income ITBIS (million RD\$)	445.00	448.80	633.60	0.9	41.20
Tourist Arrivals	3,015,079.00	3,314,063.00	3,088,548.00	9.9	-6.80

The visitor arrivals have been growing moderately in recent years. By 2012 the tourist arrivals to the Dominican Republic grew by 3.3 percent, compared to the previous year, to end with a total of 4,124.5 thousand arrivals. Of this total, 85.4 percent were Non-National arrivals, with United States being the most important source market providing 1,226.4 thousand arrivals. Canada provided 659 thousand of arrivals, Europe as a whole provided a total of 1,184.3 thousand of arrivals, and arrivals accounting for the rest of the world provided a total of 1,054.8 thousand tourists. Figure 6 shows the main markets of tourist arrivals. (Banco Central de la República Dominicana, 2010). For more information regarding tourist arrivals refer to appendix A.

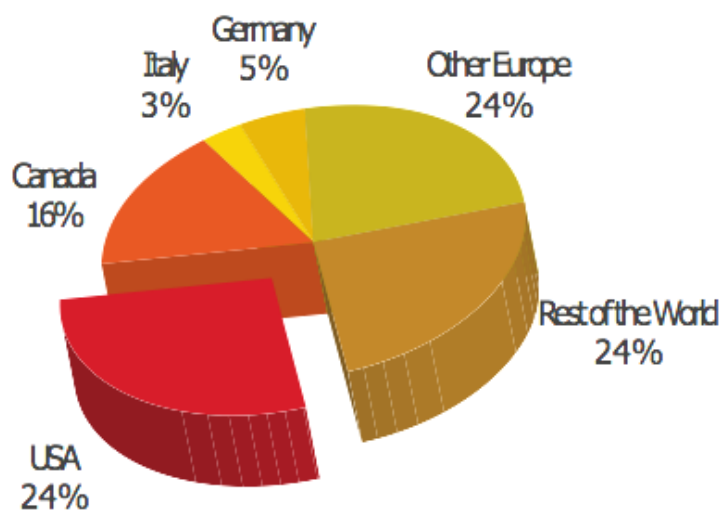


Figure 6. Tourist arrivals by main markets.

Areas of Tourism Development

Since 1970, the Dominican Republic began identifying areas with high tourism potential development. Within these areas the first one to be officially declared as a tourist pole was the Amber Coast, which encompassed the province of Puerto Plata. Nine areas in total were acknowledged as tourist poles from 1970 to 1999, and these were classified as follows:

1. Tourist pole of Puerto Plata or Amber Coast (Decree 2125 in the year of 1972)
2. Tourist pole of Constanza and Jarabacoa (Decrees 1157 of 1975, and 2729 of 1975)
3. Tourist pole of Macao-Bavaro (Decree 1256 of 1986)
4. Tourist pole of the Southern Region; Barahona, Batoruco, Independencia, and Pedernales (Decree 322 of 1991)
5. Tourist pole of Constanza and Jarabacoa (Decrees 1157 of 1975, and 2729 of 1977)
6. Tourist pole of the Northwest region; Montecristi, Dajabon, Santiago Rodriguez, and Valverde (Decree 16 of 1993)
7. Tourist pole of the Caribbean Coast from Santo Domingo to La Romana
8. Tourist pole of San Cristóbal, Palenque, Peravia, and Azua de Compostela
9. Tourist pole of Nagua and Cabrera (Decree 199 of 1999)

Site Inventory: Puerto Plata and its Sub-regional Context

The province of Puerto Plata is located within the Cibao Central sub-region which encompasses the municipalities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, Villa Isabela, Luperón, Los Hidalgos, Imbert, Guanatico, Altamira, and Sosúa in the province of Puerto Plata; Villa Bisonó, and Villa González in the province of Santiago; and Gaspar Hernández, and Jamao al Norte in the province of Espaillat (CONAU, 2000) (see figure 7).

Geomorphology

The sub-regional context of the province of Puerto Plata includes three physiographic systems: (1) The Llanura Costera del Atlántico, (2) The Cordillera Septentrional and a section of (3) the Valle del Cibao.

The first system, the Llanura Costera del Atlántico extends from the province of Montecristi to the province of María Trinidad Sánchez. This system takes over 40% of the province of Puerto Plata, including the municipalities of La Isabela, Luperón, Imbert, San Felipe de Puerto Plata, and Sosúa. The second physiographic system is the Cordillera Septentrional, which extends from the province of Montecristi to the province of Samaná. This physiographic system is the second most important system in the Dominican Republic, with an approximate extension of 3090 square miles. The system includes the municipalities of Los Hidalgos, Guanatico, Altamira, and a section of the municipalities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, Sosúa, La Isabela, and Imbert all located in the province of Puerto Plata. The third system is the Valle del Cibao, which includes the municipality of Santiago in the province of Santiago (CONAU, 2000).

Natural Resources Within the Sub-regional Context

The Dirección Nacional de Parques (national park service) has declared several natural areas of the province of Puerto Plata as National Parks and Protected Areas as ways of encouraging the environmental conservation of these areas within province. Within the sub-region, Scientific Reserves have also been established for the development of several research projects, which main purposes are to study of the forest and soil, as well as the flora and fauna biodiversity of the area.

In Puerto Plata's sub-regional context four protected areas can be found: the Scientific Reserve of Loma Isabel de Torres; the Historic Park of La Isabela; and the National Parks of El Choco and, the National Park of Estero Hondo. Figure 8 shows the Scientific Reserve, the protected areas, and the national parks within the sub-regional context of the province of Puerto Plata.

Scientific Reserve Loma Isabel de Torres: Located in the southern portion of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, the Scientific Reserve Loma Isabel de Torres became a protected area in 1989 (CONAU, 2000). With an elevation of 2624 ft (800 m), and an extension of 8.4 miles (22 km), the Loma Isabel de Torres has tropical rainforest predominance. Several amenities are within the reserve; a funicular that transports the visitors from the base to the top of the Isabel de Torres hill; a botanical garden with an approximate of 600 plant species; and an observation deck on the top of a very popular Christ's statue similar to the Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

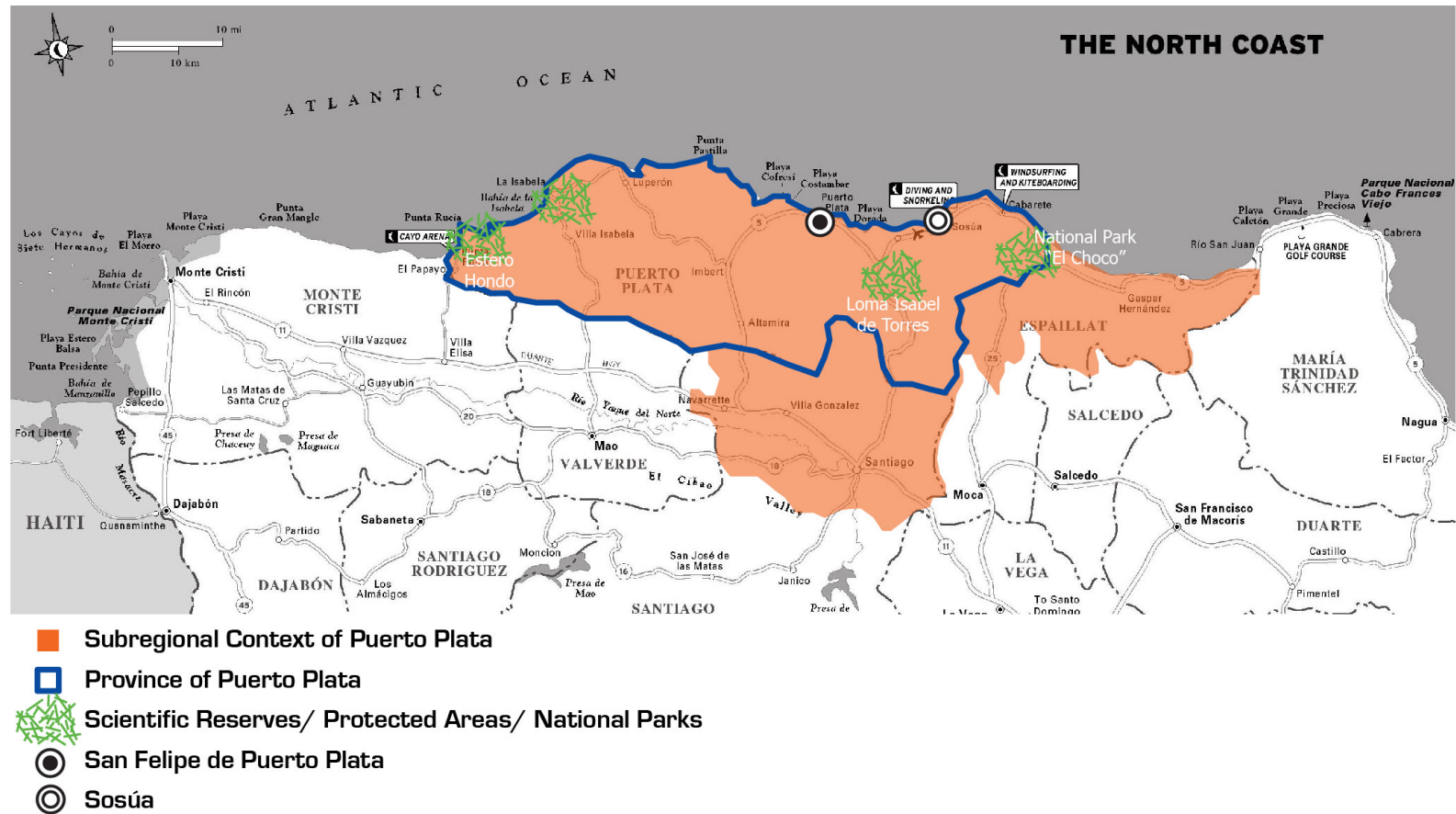


Figure 8. Scientific reserves, protected areas, and National Parks within the sub-regional context of Puerto Plata (graphic developed by the author).

La Isabela Historic Park: Established in 1493, La Isabela was the first European urban village, which included a castle, a cemetery, the admiral's house, a church, and an observation tower. The settlement survived several hurricanes, but it was not until 1496 when Columbus decided to abandon it, and move the town to a new settlement, the now city of Santo Domingo. Thirty acres constitute the village of La Isabela, which was designated a Historic Park in the year of 1969.

El Choco National Park: Declared as a National Park in 1968, El Choco has an extension of 30 sq miles (78 sq km). Located in the municipality of Sosúa, the park is ideal for biking, hiking, bird watching, and exploring its predominant cave systems. This protected area is accessible from the town of Cabarete in the municipality of Sosúa.

Estero Hondo National Park (Marine Sanctuary): With an approximate extension of 4 miles (6 km approx.), the National Park Estero Hondo is a coastal lagoon located in the northwest section of the province of Puerto Plata. The area, with exceptional beaches, contains the Caribbean's second largest mangrove forest, which is home to the extremely endangered species of Antillean Manatee. Figure 9 shows a mangrove forest in Estero Hondo National Park.

Coastal Resources

The sub-regional context of the province of Puerto Plata encompasses 100 miles of beaches, many of which are located within coral reef barriers. These beaches are: Punta Rusia, Playa Grande, Playa Cofresí, Long Beach, Playa Dorada, Sosúa, Cabarete, La Ermita, Magante, and Playa Rogelio.

Within these beaches the most popular ones are (1) Playa Dorada, located in the municipality of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, (2) Sosúa, and (3) Cabarete, both located in the municipality of Sosúa (Plan Regional de Desarrollo del Cibao, 1981).



Figure 9. Mangrove forest in Estero Hondo National Park (photograph by the author, 2012).

Playa Dorada beach, located 2 miles east from the city of Puerto Plata, encompasses a total of 370 acres with 2 miles of protected barrier reefs. The area encompasses the Playa Dorada tourist complex with a commercial area, movie theaters, restaurants, several golf courses, and a capacity of 4,027 rooms (2000 est.).

Sosúa Beach, located in the municipality of Sosúa, is 9 miles east of the city of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, and has an average of 323,000 square miles (206,720,000

acres). Divided into two main zones, Los Charamicos, and El Batey, Sosúa Beach is popular for sports such as scuba diving, and surf.

Cabarete Beach, located 3 miles east of the town of Sosúa, is considered one of the most suitable beaches of the Caribbean for practicing Windsurf. The beach has an extension of 2,798 square miles (1,790,720 acres). Other recreational activities commonly practiced within the area are bird watching and canoeing; both of which take place mainly in the Laguna Cabarete located in the previously described El Choco National Park.

Transportation Infrastructure

Road Infrastructure

The road infrastructure of Puerto Plata's sub-regional context encompasses the Autopista Duarte, which is the main road that connects the province of Santiago with Puerto Plata. According to the Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC (state ministry of transportation and public infrastructure), the Autopista Duarte has the highest traffic flow of the sub-region, with an average of 8,123 vehicles per day in the Santiago-Navarrete section, and 4,481 vehicles for the Navarrete-Puerto Plata section. In the Puerto Plata-Sosúa the traffic flow increments for an average of 6,100 vehicles per day (CONAU, 2000).

In the province of Puerto Plata, eight regional roads connect the different towns of the province with the sub-regional roads. From these roads, the Carretera Turística Luperón (Luperón scenic road) is the road with the highest traffic. Figure 10 shows the existing road infrastructure of Puerto Plata's sub-regional context.

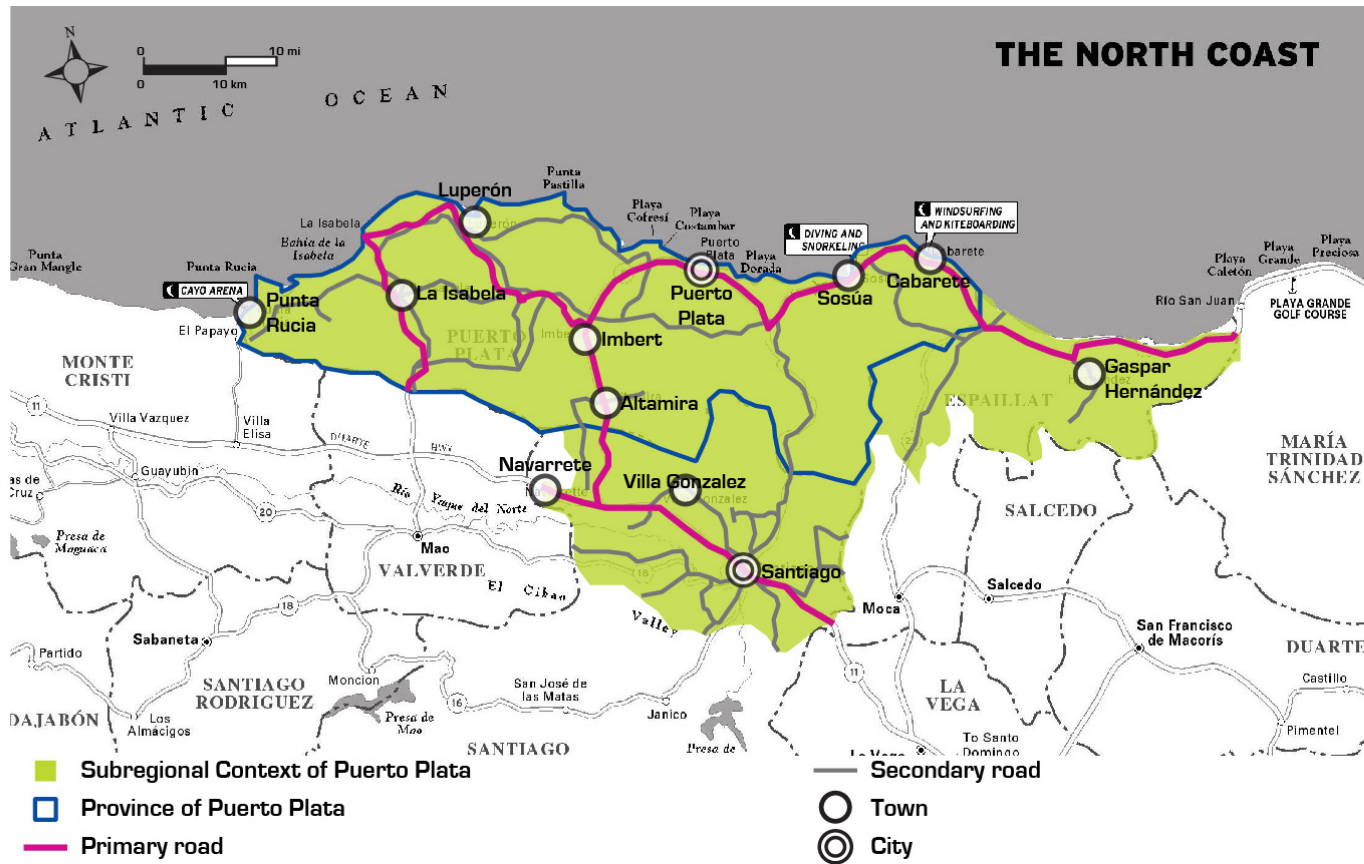


Figure 10. Road infrastructure of Puerto Plata's sub-regional context (graphic developed by the author).

Airport and Port Infrastructures

Built in 1978, the international airport Gregorio Luperón is located in the municipality of Sosúa in Puerto Plata. The province also has a port, which serves the sub-regional context of Puerto Plata, and represents a vital infrastructure for the imports and exports of the country. This port is located in the town of San Felipe de Puerto Plata.

Revitalization is needed in both the airport and the port infrastructures. In the year of 1996, the Swedish firm Scandiaconsul, presented a report and a design proposal that encouraged tourism infrastructures, including a marine and a yacht club. The estimated cost of the project was US\$43.6 millions, the project, however was not developed by the province (CONAU, 2000).

Administrative Divisions

One of the northern provinces of the Dominican Republic, Puerto Plata is divided into eight municipalities, and twelve municipal districts. Figure 11 shows the administrative division of the province of Puerto Plata.

These administrative divisions are classified as follows:

1. San Felipe de Puerto Plata (Municipality)
 - Maimón (Municipal District)
 - Yásica Arriba (Municipal District)
 - Montellano (Municipal District)
2. Altamira (Municipality)
 - Río Grande (Municipal District)
3. Guanatico

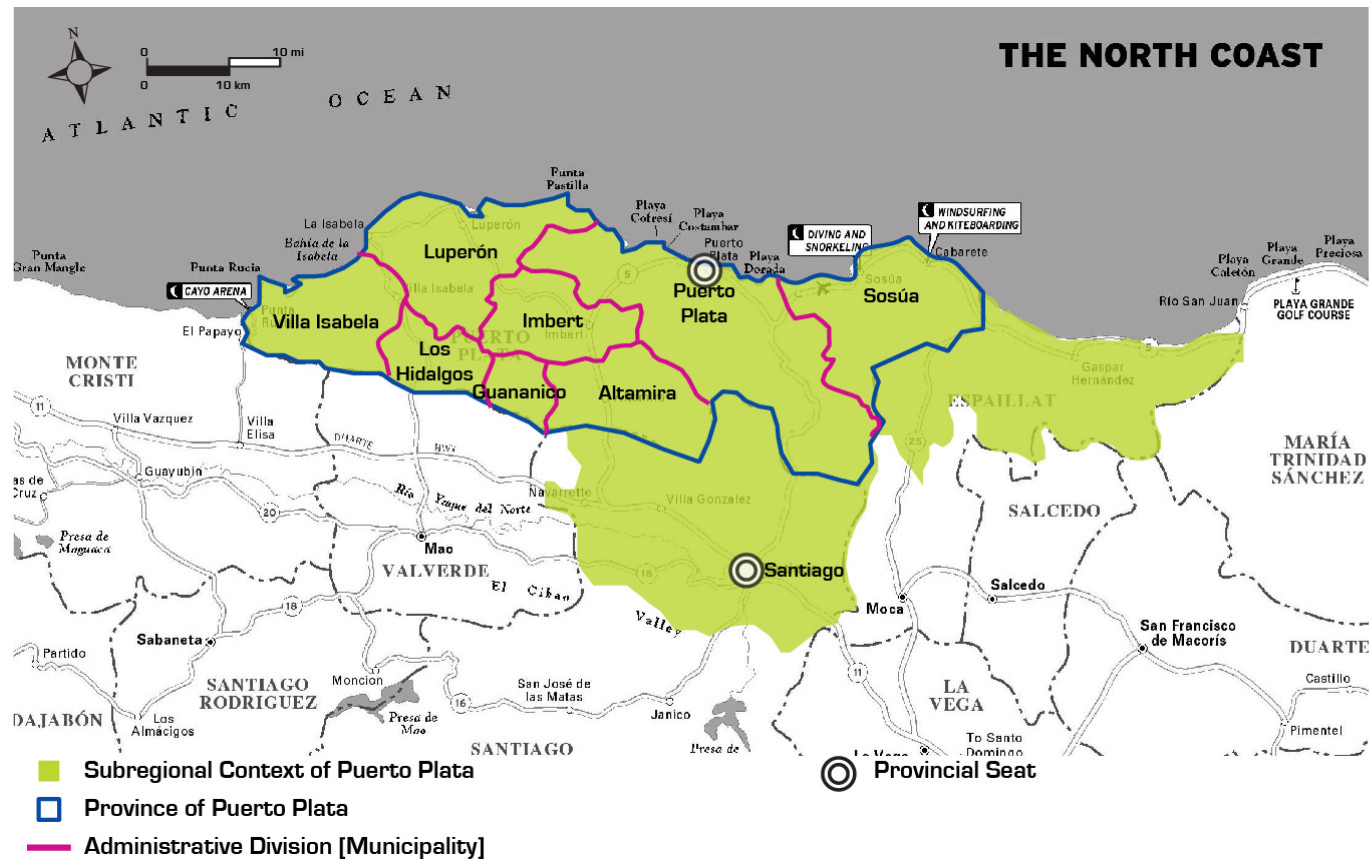


Figure 11. Administrative division of the province of Puerto Plata (graphic developed by the author).

4. Imbert
5. Los Hidalgos
 - Navas (Municipal District)
6. Luperón
 - Belloso (Municipal District)
 - La Isabela (Municipal District)
7. Sosúa
 - Cabarete (Municipal District)
 - Sabaneta de Yásica (Municipal District)
8. Villa Isabela
 - Estero Hondo (Municipal District)
 - La Jaiba (Municipal District)
 - Guatele (Municipal District)

From these municipalities, San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa are ones with the highest percentage of population in the province. According to the Oficina Nacional de Estadística/ONE (National Office of Statistics) both San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa account for the 47.3 % and 14.4% of the total population of the province respectively (2008 est.). These two municipalities are also the greater income providers of the economy of the province of Puerto Plata.

Economic Activities

According to the Ministerio de Agricultura (The Ministry of Agriculture), by the end of 1970 the main economic activities of the province were agriculture and farming.

By 1999 Puerto Plata used to produce the 53.4% of the cacao of the region, the 50.8 % of the corn, and the 38.5% of the coffee. In addition to that, two major sugar refineries operated in the province (CONAU, 2000). Figure 12 shows a land productivity map supported with information provided by the Ministerio de Agricultura.

The tourism sector also played an important role in the economy of the province. In the decade of the 70's large hotel developments were established in the municipality of San Felipe de Puerto Plata. From these developments, the Playa Dorada project was a commercial and hotel development that paved the road for the tourism success of Puerto Plata.

The tourism and transportation infrastructures helped support and develop the then growing tourism sector of the province. For this matter, in the decade of the 80's, the economy of the province started shifting from an agricultural and farming-based economy into a service-based economy (Yunen, 2000). Nowadays, the tourism industry is the main income activity of Puerto Plata, with recreational tourism being the prevailing type of tourism practiced in the province (Pellerano & Herrera, 2003).

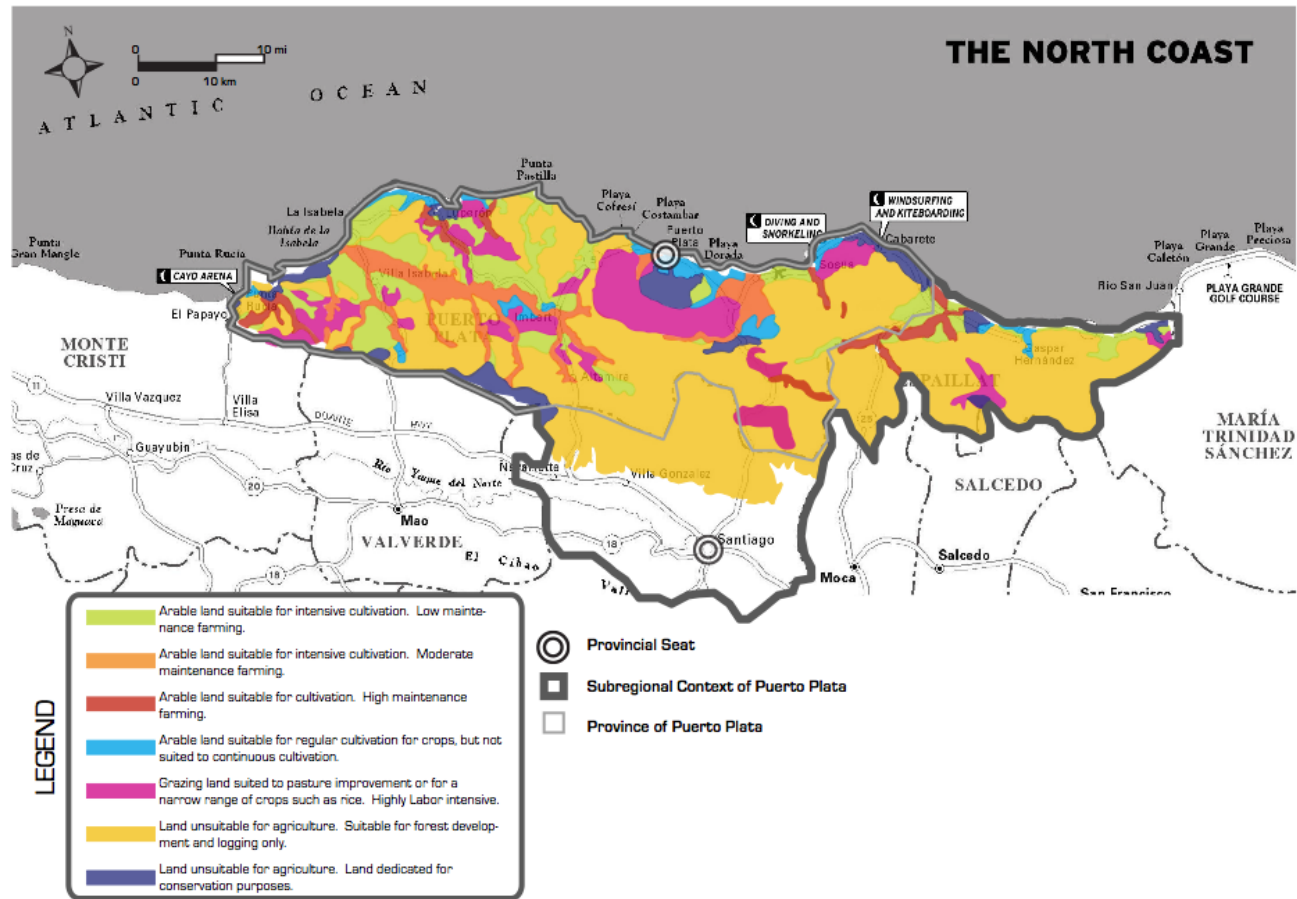


Figure 12. Land productivity map (graphic developed by the author).

Site Inventory and Analysis of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa

Cultural Heritage

Traditions

Several festivities take place in both, San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. Held in the months of February and March the carnival parade is celebrated with music and dances. Several characters are part of the carnival; the main one is the Diablo Cojuelo (Limping Devil), which usually wears a mask, sleigh bells, and a whip. The carnival is the most relevant festivities of these two towns; therefore it is a strong reflection of the culture of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. Figures 13 and 14 depict the costumes used in the carnival celebration.

Architecture

The towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa are characterized by various architectural styles. A vernacular architecture style prevails in Sosúa, and an eclectic Victorian architecture is the dominant style of San Felipe de Puerto Plata.

Vernacular architecture is a style that utilizes local construction materials, thus its preservation is important because it reflects the local traditions of a given town or region.

Victorian architecture was a predominant style established from the middle 1800's to the earlier 1900's. The style's name refers to the reign of the Queen Victoria. In the Caribbean this style was modified, as the weather required an adaptation of the construction materials.



Figure 13. Diablo Cojuelo's carnival costume (photograph by Allan Romano, 2012).



Figure 14. Children wearing body paint, (photograph by Allan Romano, 2012).

The Victorian buildings of San Felipe de Puerto Plata are a well-known tourist attraction. A good representation of this architectural style can be found in La Zona Colonial of San Felipe de Puerto Plata, a neighborhood of Victorian buildings established in the year of 1857. The elaborated wooden details are one of the main characteristics of the Victorian architecture style of the Caribbean. Figure 15 shows the Casa de la Cultura, a Victorian building in San Felipe de Puerto Plata.



Figure 15. Casa de la Cultura (photograph by bonaeno).

Besides the neighborhood of La Zona Colonial in San Felipe de Puerto Plata, two other historic buildings are of great importance for the cultural heritage of these municipalities. These monuments are the Puerto de San Felipe (San Felipe fort), and El Faro (the cast-iron lighthouse).

Named after Felipe II (Philip II of Spain), the San Felipe fort is a colonial building that dates back to the 1577. Its main purpose was to protect the province of

Puerto Plata from corsairs and pirates. The fort was declared as National Monument in the 1980. Figure 16 shows the San Felipe Fort with the Atlantic Ocean as backdrop.



Figure 16. San Felipe Fort (photograph by Lifestyle Holidays Vacations Resort).

Another structure of cultural and historical relevance is the Puerto Plata Lighthouse. This 80-foot tall structure was built in the year 1879 by the New York firm R. Deeley & Company. The cast iron lighthouse is one of the few cast iron lighthouses still standing in the Americas, and the only one of its kind in the Dominican Republic.

The Oficina de Patrimonio Cultural of Puerto Plata (Puerto Plata's Cultural Heritage Office) developed a restoration project due to the structure corrosion and its overall poor condition. The project received funding from several entities, which allowed its restoration by the year of 2004.

The Tourism Sector of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa

As mentioned before, the province of Puerto Plata is well known for its exceptional beaches. However, this type of recreational tourism, which can also be found in other regions of the country, is not what makes Puerto Plata and Sosúa distinctive destinations. Their strong cultural traditions, the richness of their existing historical sites, and the exceptional splendor of the natural resources of the region, characterize these two municipalities as unique tourism clusters within the northern region of the Dominican Republic.

The two municipalities with the higher tourism capacity, and the majority of jobs in that industry, are the municipalities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa as well. According to the Ministerio de Turismo (Ministry of Tourism), in the year of 2008 the municipality of San Felipe de Puerto Plata was responsible for a total of 5,505 tourism-related jobs, while Sosúa accounted for 2,659. Investment in infrastructure and tourism related projects are also high in both municipalities. Figure 17 shows the Puerto Plata's investment in the municipalities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

Accommodations

In terms of the infrastructure that supports the tourism industry both towns hold the biggest share within the province. In the year of 2008, a total of 131 hotels were located in both San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, from these, the municipality of Puerto Plata had 55 hotels, for a total of 15,318 beds, and the municipality of Sosúa had 76 hotels, for a total of 8,020 beds (Ministerio de Turismo, 2008). Figure 18 shows the

hotel infrastructure of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, and Table 2 shows the tourism indicators for each municipality.

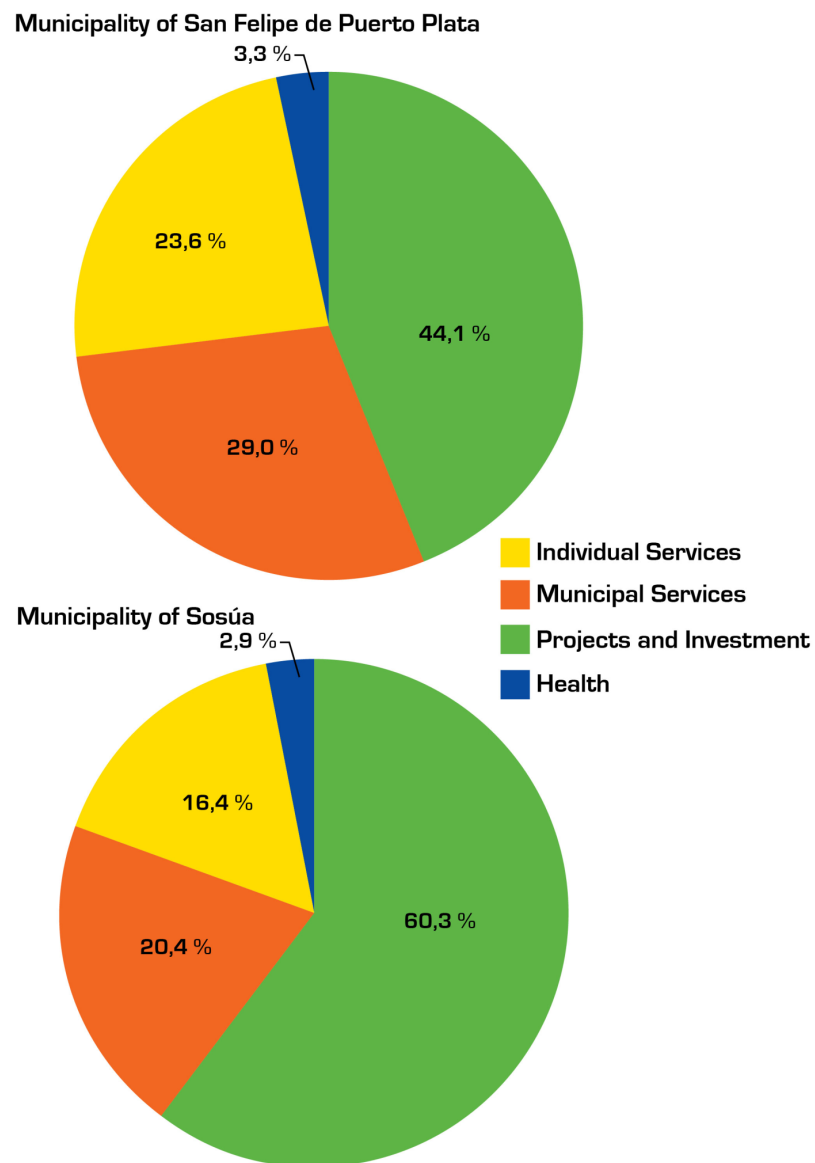


Figure 17. Municipalities' investment (Ministerio de Turismo, 2008).

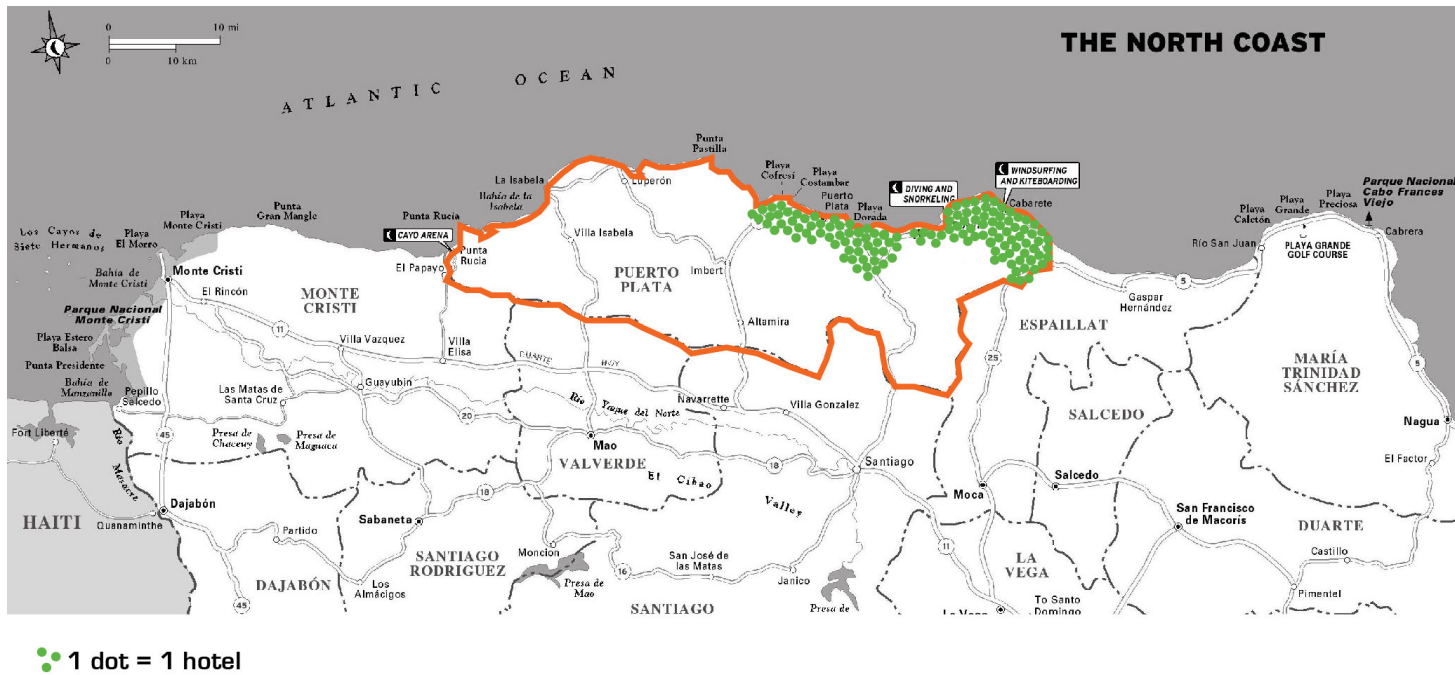


Figure 18. Hotel infrastructure of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa (graphic developed by the author).

Table 2

San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa Tourism Indicators (Ministerio de Turismo, 2008)

Puerto Plata: Tourism Indicators		Sosúa: Tourism Indicators	
Lodging	55	Lodging	76
Rooms	8,641	Rooms	4,535
Beds	15,318	Beds	8,020
Jobs	5,505	Jobs	2,659
Source: Ministerio de Turismo, 2008		Source: Ministerio de Turismo, 2008	

As previously described in the literature, the definition of a region has less to do with determining where its outer boundary is situated, and more with creating a case for shared interests, thus regional planning occurs most often with respect to functions and relationships rather than jurisdictions (Seltzer & Carbonell, 2011).

The selection of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa as the towns that needed to be vital for the regional planning initiative of the province of Puerto Plata had more to do with the overlapping similarities in the economic and cultural aspects of these towns than their physical proximity. These key factors were certainly the main elements that helped define the regional boundaries for the tourism planning approach of this thesis.

Analysis

Based in the previous works developed by the CONAU, and each of the municipalities' information previously described in this thesis, the inventory of the region is presented in (1) a regional issues map, and (2) a regional analysis map.

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Analysis

Based in the previous works developed by the CONAU, and each of the municipalities' information previously described in this thesis, the inventory of the region is presented in (1) a regional issues map, and (2) a regional analysis map.

The Regional Issues Map is an inventory of the road and traffic conflict of the region, the high flood risk areas, and the areas with uncontrolled sprawl (see figure 19). This map is a composite map that utilizes an analysis of the province previously developed in 2000 by the CONAU in the document *Lineamiento de Políticas de Desarrollo Urbano para la ciudad de Puerto Plata*. The map also includes the information presented previously in the site inventory section of this thesis, as well as information provided by entities of the government of the Dominican Republic such as the Ministerio de Turismo, the Ministerio de Agricultura, and the Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones.

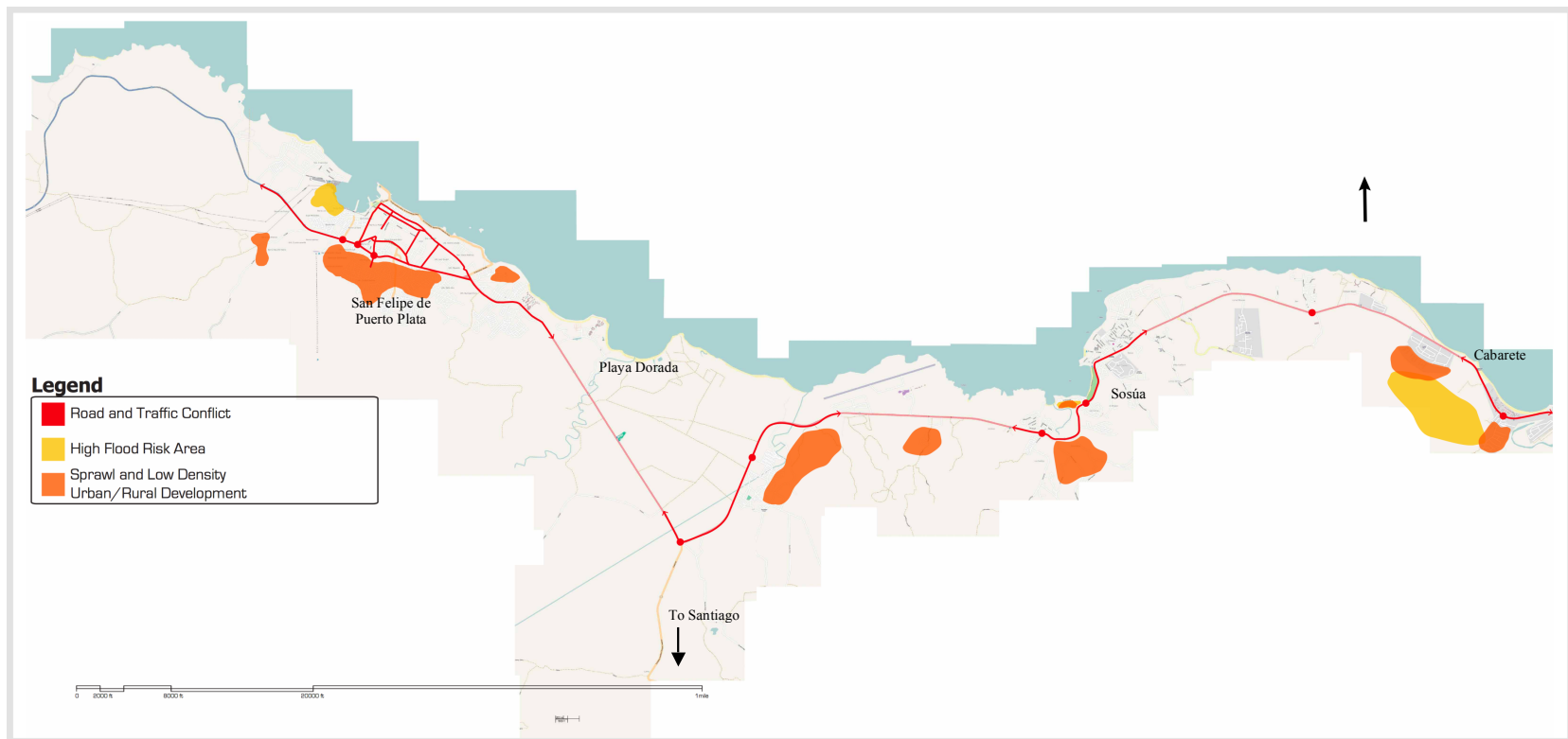


Figure 19. Regional issues map (graphic developed by the author).

The Regional Analysis Map is an analysis that incorporates the inventory presented in the Regional Issues Map, together with information provided by the CONAU, as well as data provided by the Ministerio de Agricultura, and the Ministerio de Turismo of the Dominican Republic. The map shows areas of critical environmental conservation, areas where historical preservation is needed, areas of urgent infrastructure improvement, road infrastructure that need to be beautified and improved, and the areas where growth development should be controlled (see figure 20). This analysis map helped in the later development of the tourism planning proposals for San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, which are presented in the concept development section of this thesis.

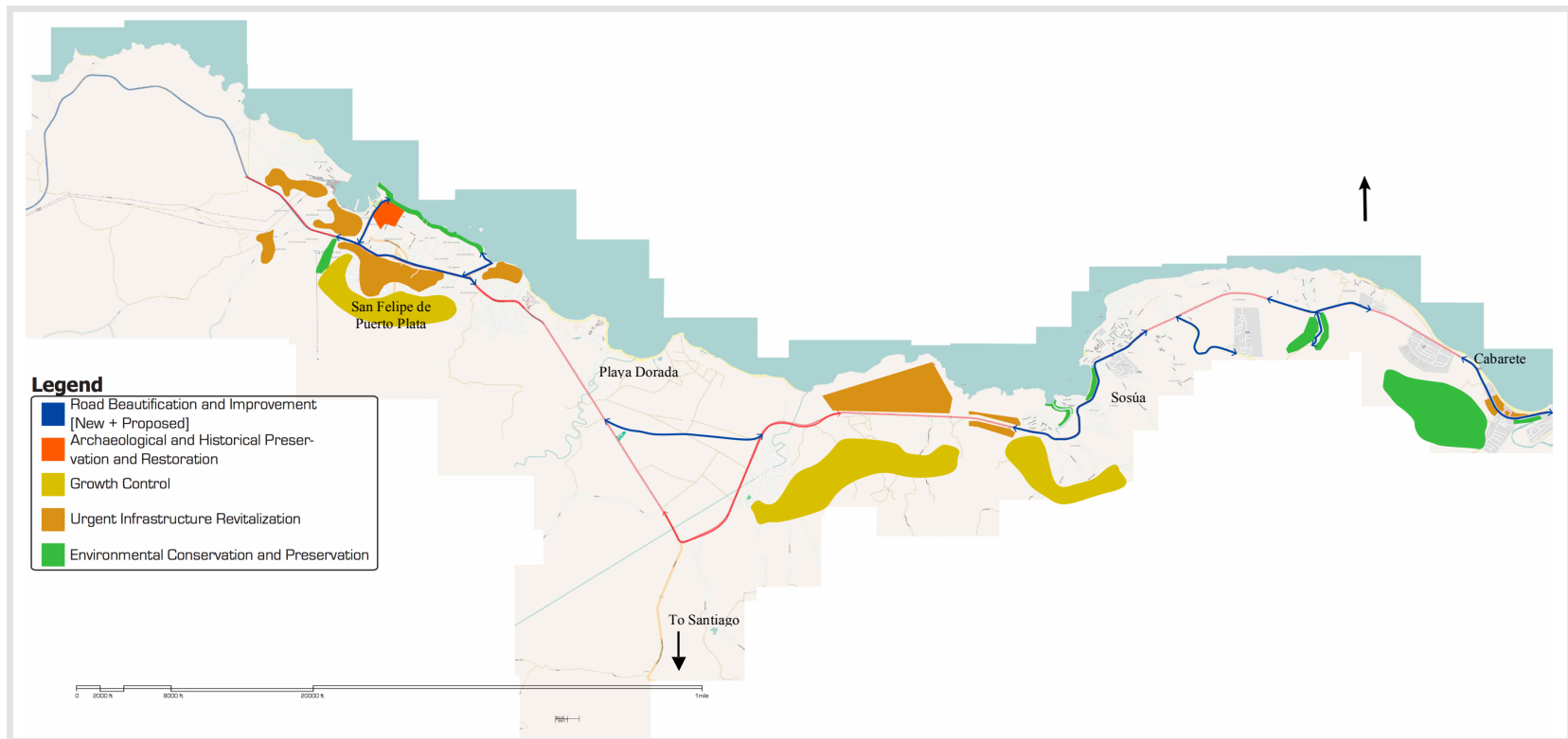


Figure 20. Regional analysis map (graphic developed by the author).

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the potential for a regional planning initiative to help the future tourism development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa in the province of Puerto Plata. This thesis made use of a direct site inventory and analysis developed by the author, as well as a case study methodology because of its appropriateness in analyzing the tourism phenomena within cultural and ecological contexts similar to the one portrayed in Puerto Plata.

The case study research, a qualitative process methodology, is the analysis of a phenomenon where the different dynamics or developmental factors are stressed in relation to its context. The case study investigates the phenomenon specially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1993). Frequently used in the fields of sociology and science, the case study research is becoming more familiar to the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning.

Evaluation Method

The themes of qualitative research established by Michael Quinn Patton provided a framework for the decision-making process of the case study methodology of this thesis research. These themes are classified as (1) design strategies, and (2) data collection and fieldwork strategies (Patton, 2001). This thesis made use of the purposeful sampling design strategy, which is supported by a qualitative data collection method.

Purposeful sampling: Case for study (e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences) are selected because they offer useful manifestations, in this specific case, of the tourism planning phenomenon; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population.

Qualitative data Collection: Observations that yield detailed description; inquiry in depth. In this thesis the researcher's experience of the site helped in the data collection process which was supported by an observation process.

Reflective Analysis

Another criterion utilized during the data evaluation process of the methodology of this thesis was the reflective analysis, which is a method in which the researcher relies primarily on intuition and judgment in order to evaluate the phenomenon being studied (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The reflective analysis was relevant for the case study evaluation of this thesis because the researcher's personal experience of the region was vital for the selection and later evaluation of the tourism planning practices and developments that best fitted within the context of Puerto Plata. Figure 21 shows the tourism planning methodology utilized in this thesis.

Case Studies

The six case studies analyzed on this thesis were selected because they are successful manifestations of tourism planning initiatives in contexts similar to the ones of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. These case studies were also selected based on the

components of a tourism plan suggested by Edward Inskeep (1991), which is previously explained in the literature review section of this thesis. From these components, the transportation infrastructure and the tourist attractions were the aspects that helped in the selection of the case studies.

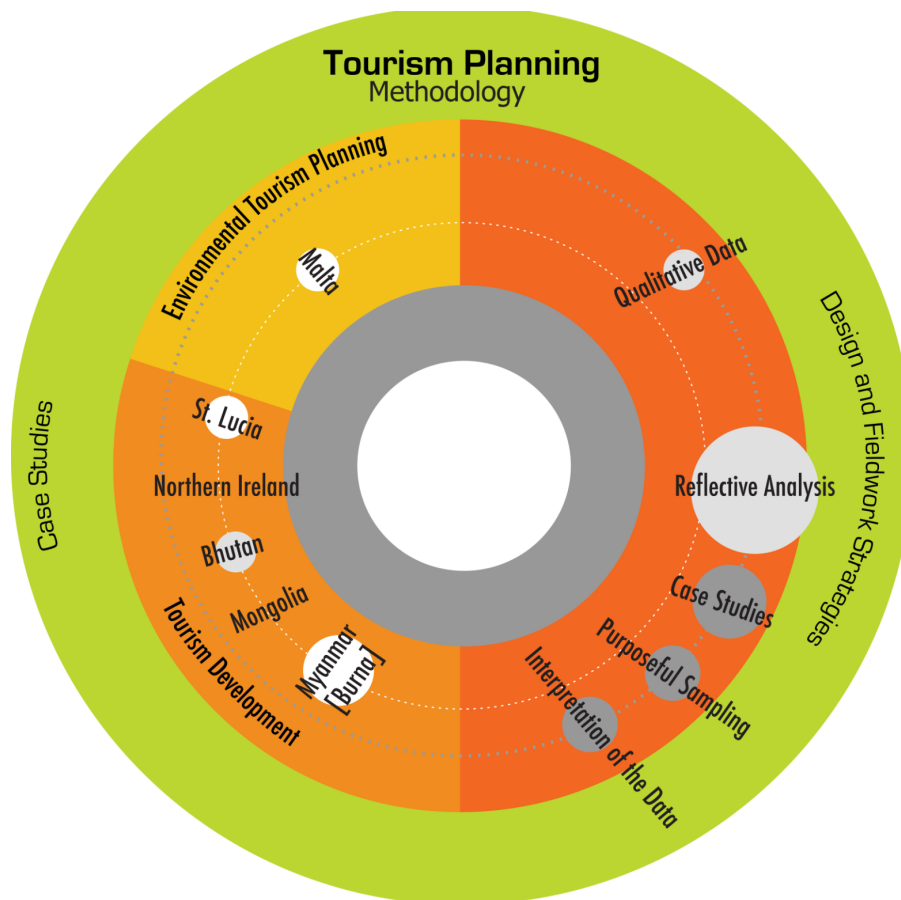


Figure 21. Tourism planning methodology (graphic developed by the author).

Two other aspects incorporated in the selection of the case studies were the environmental and the policy-making aspects of tourism development. The six case studies selected are the following:

1. Tourism Policy and Planning in St. Lucia
2. An environmental analysis in the Malta Tourism Plan
3. Tourism Development Plan for the Northeast Area of Northern Ireland
4. Tourism Planning and Development in Bhutan
5. National Tourism Plan in Burma (now Republic of the Union of Myanmar)
6. Planning for Tourist Attractions in Mongolia

Tourism Policy and Planning in St. Lucia

An eastern Caribbean island located northwest of Barbados, south of Martinique, and northeast of Saint Vincent (see figure 22), with a total land cover area of 238.23 sq mi and a population of 174,000 (2010 est.), St. Lucia is a Caribbean island state whose economy has been greatly influenced by tourism (Gössling, 2003). The island offers attractive tourism opportunities that comprise good climate and beaches, tropical landscape with mountain and sea, and friendly people (Spinrad, 1982).

In St. Lucia, the government has had a long-standing interest in promoting tourism as a means of diversifying St. Lucia's economy beyond its agricultural base. Rapid change, foreign investment and control, large-scale hotels, and tax incentives characterize the island tourism sector (Gössling, 2003). The existing economic situation of the country and the intention of the government of using the tourism industry as way of increasing employment became the base for a planning framework that would help sustain the existing economic tourism dependence of the island.

In the scope of expansion and suburbanization of the tourism sector, several planning efforts were formulated but not approved in St. Lucia. The majority of these plans intended to control the future planning of the island as a way of responding to the growing tourism demands. One of these plans was the Land Plan and Development Act by the Government of St. Lucia (GOSL) in 1984. The main purpose of the plan was to serve as a development control tool for the different tourism development efforts of the island.

St Lucia economically relies in the tourism industry mainly because of the benefits it provides in terms of employment. In the decade of the 90s, the highly tourism-dependent economy of the country was facing an environmental instability and a noticeable lack of planning.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the existing literature in environmental research shows very little information regarding the environmental aspect of tourism development. In St. Lucia this panorama is similar. In the decade of the 80s tourist sector did not dedicate enough interest in the environmental aspect therefore evident negative impacts such as the destruction of wetlands, and the construction of large hotels in areas of high scenic value occurred in the island (Wilkinson, 1997).

The lack of tourism planning was notable, and the deficiency of the existing policies of the island in the environmental aspect, brought an opportunity for the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) to propose strategies for the future development of the country. The growing mass-tourism style, and high-volume attractions such as gambling and shopping developments were some of the major threats

that St. Lucia was facing. Because these types of developments have proven to negatively impact the natural environment, in 1991, the CCA encouraged a low-density tourism development since it could better distribute the tourism revenues in the local proximity; this type of development was more socially acceptable, and finally it was less stressful for human and natural environments.

In order to encourage and adopt the proposed strategies, the country had to address various environmental, economic, and infrastructural requirements, which included the following (Gössling, 2003):

- Environmental: A coastal zone management policy and related legislation;
- Economic: A long-term tourism planning that emphasizes in increasing the tourism multiplier;
- Infrastructural: A review of large-scale projects because of their potential to alter the country's low-density tourism style and to place stress on the natural environment and overload available infrastructure; and consideration of requirements for energy and potable water self-sufficiency, self-contained sewage treatment plants, charge fee for solid waste, fee for construction sand, and maintenance of a dispersed pattern of distribution of infrastructure.



Figure 22. Map of St. Lucia (Gössling, 2003).

Applicability of the St. Lucia Case Study to the Puerto Plata Tourism Planning Initiative

The previously described unadopted tourism policies and plans set the direction to guide the future tourism development of St. Lucia. Despite the dominant mass-tourism market orientation of the country, and the environmental stress that is directly linked to this type of development, the assistance of the government helped in making the different communities aware of the high environmental and cultural value of the existing tourism zones of the country.

Research has shown that tourism development has had negative impacts in some of the bay areas of St. Lucia; however, activities such as agriculture, and the deforestation that comes with this economic development model is more directly linked to the existing degradation of the natural resources of St. Lucia.

In the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, the lack of tourism planning initiatives have led to the development of extensive hotel infrastructures and high-density tourism zones. A transition to a low-density tourism must be emphasized because this type of development has proven to cause less environmental stress, and also encourages the involvement of the local residents. In addition by encouraging this type of tourism, the economic revenues are more likely to be distributed in the local proximity thus maintaining the wealth within both towns and therefore the region.

An Environmental Analysis of the Malta Tourism Plan

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) assisted the country of Malta in the design of the Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan. The country, located south of Sicily, encompasses the islands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino (see Figure 23a.). The Maltese islands have an economy largely based in the tourism service sector due to its significant historical places, fine beaches, and a good accessibility from the majority of the tourist markets of northern Europe.

Initial steps towards a regional plan were taken in the country and a general land use survey was carried in the year of 1989, which included an inventory of the major historical interest places, the traditional village cores and clusters, major panoramic views, beaches, and the areas of intensive tourism development. The expansion of a tourism-oriented economy was elaborated, and the objective of improving the quality of the tourism product while diversifying it (Inskeep, 1991) was carefully planned. Figure 23b. shows the tourist attractions in the Maltese Island Tourism Development Plan.

The environmental analysis of the tourism plan for Malta examines the characteristics of the natural environment and resource areas (Inskeep, 1991) of the country. The plan provided an analysis of the environmentally sensitive areas, which helped portray the constraints for tourism development in certain areas of the country (see figure 23c.). These analyses served to better determine the proper locations for tourism development in order to avoid future ecological degradation, and to help develop environmental policies.

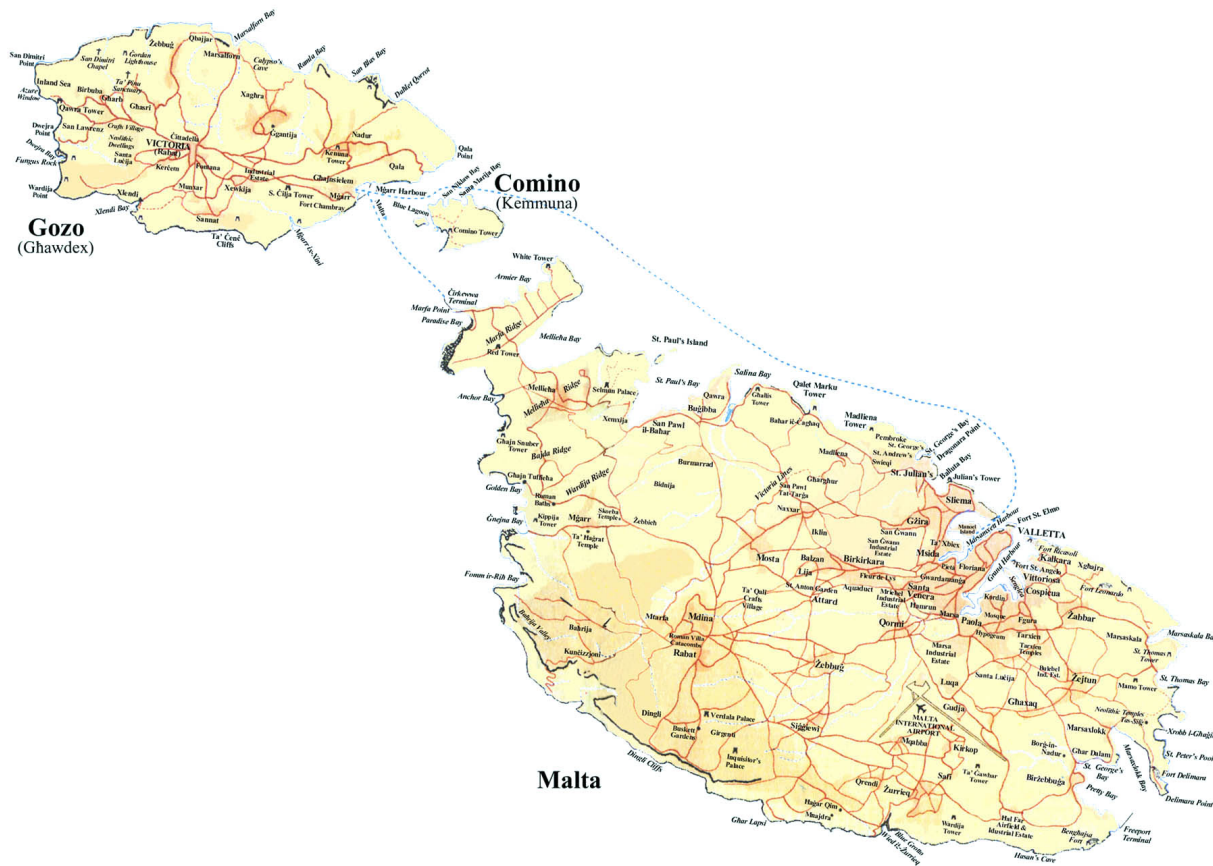


Figure 23a. Map of the Maltese Islands (Vidiani Maps).

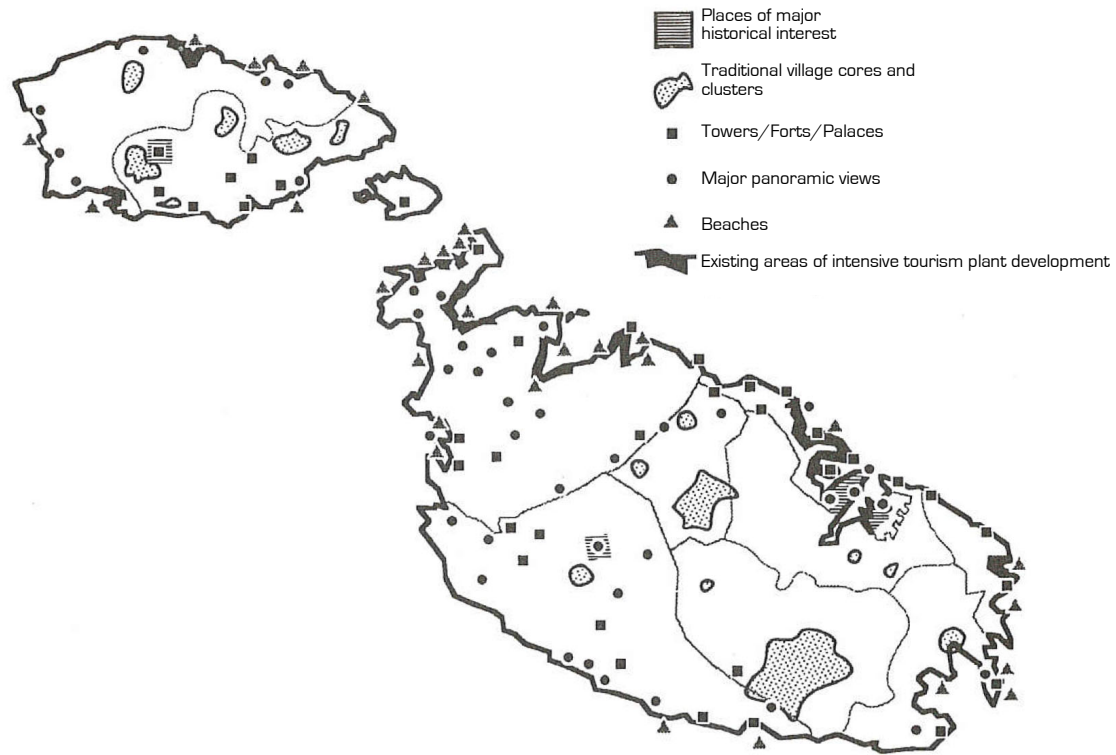


Figure 23b. Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan: tourist attractions (Inskeep, 1991).

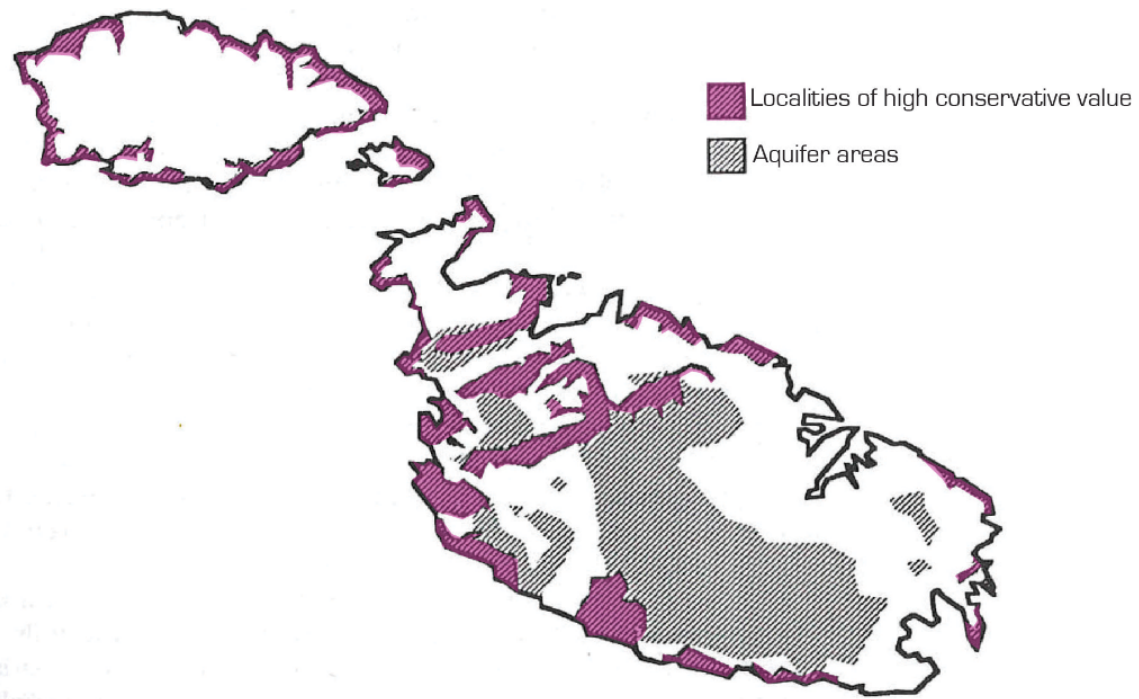


Figure 23c. Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan: environmentally sensitive zones and development constraints (Inskip, 1991).

The environmentally sensitive areas were classified based on several criteria; these criteria were as follows (Inskeep, 1991):

- Agricultural classification: Lands for good agricultural capability that should be retained for agricultural use;
- Ecological: Lands that contain important flora and fauna that should be preserved;
- Geological: Areas of important geological features that should be preserved;
- Entomological: Areas important as insect habitats; and
- Ornithological: Areas important as bird habitats, including stopping points for migratory birds.

Based on these analyses, the Maltese Island Development Plan proposed twelve zones of future development with its corresponding tourism-related regulations and design recommendations. These regulations and recommendations were designed with the intent of being integrated in any future tourism plan proposal.

Zones 3 to 6 were designated as priority development areas where major improvements needed to occur. Specific planning procedures were developed into these zones as they were considered to be the main archaeological and historical sites of the country. In these zones, the plan proposed several improvement programs, which included the establishment of environmental corridors dedicated to the design of new tourist circuits, and village core conservation plans. Figure 23d. shows the designated zones for conservation and preservation (colored in green).

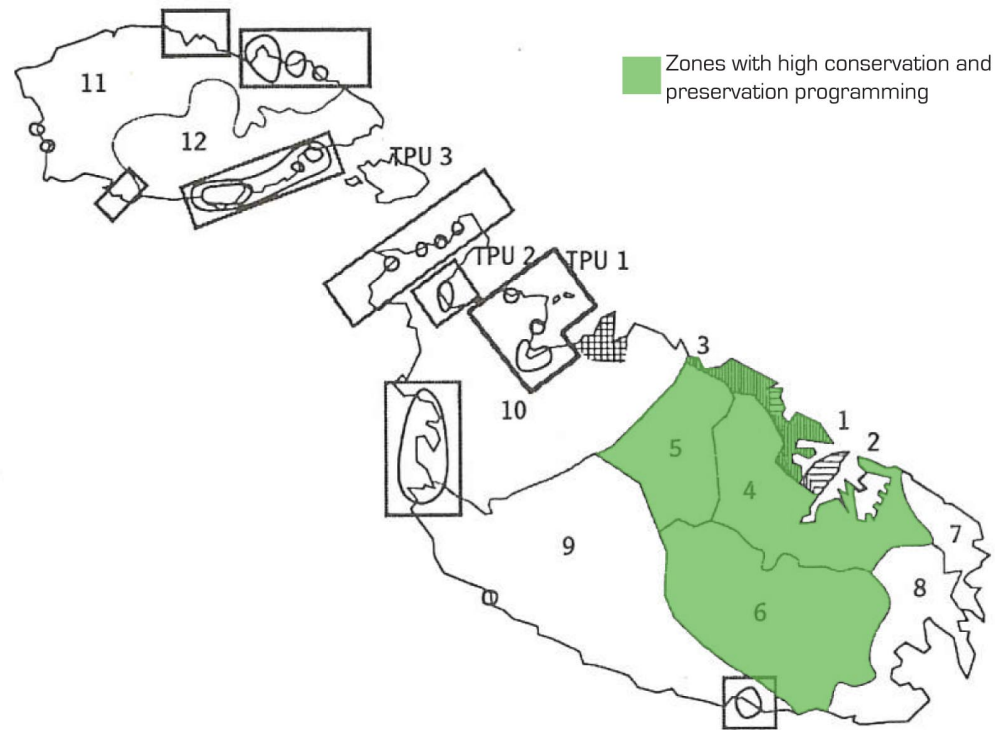


Figure 23d. Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan: zones with high conservation and preservation programming (Inskeep, 1991).

Applicability of the Maltese Island Development Plan Case Study to the Puerto Plata Tourism Planning Initiative

Malta is an example of a country with an established tourism industry. The country developed the Maltese Islands Development Plan with the objective of bringing diversity to their tourism market, as well as planning for a tourism expansion while preserving the natural features and the archaeological sites of the country. As described previously, the Maltese Tourism Plan primarily responded to the possible ecological, archaeological, and historical site degradation due to the extensive tourism development of the country of Malta.

Because the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa share a similar scenario as the Maltese Islands, the need of an analysis that studies the susceptible ecological areas of the Puerto Plata sub-region, and the historical and archaeological sites that are in the vicinities of both towns is needed. After such analysis is done, a complementary zone designation will help in categorizing the future purposes of the different areas of the region.

Tourism Development Plan for the Northeast Area of Northern Ireland

The Northeast area of Northern Ireland is a model of a developed tourism area that started falling into decline in the late 1980. In the region, the tourism industry was responsible for the 7 % of the overall employment. For this matter, rejuvenation through planning was needed in the Northeast area of Northern Ireland, which had an

approximate of 540 square miles, a population of 88,000 (1989 est.), and a tourism market dominated by domestic visitors (Inskeep, 1991).

The sub-regional tourism plan for the northeast area of Northern Ireland in the U.K. included a set of strategies and recommendations based in previous analyses and survey of the area together with an evaluation of the existing resources.

The approach for the elaboration of the sub-regional tourism plan was as follows (Inskeep, 1991):

- Analyze the historical and present tourism situation and any prevailing trends.
- Conduct a survey of visitors to provide information on the activities, perceptions, and attitudes of persons currently visiting the area.
- Survey and evaluate the tourism resources.
- Identify the major strengths and weakness of these resources
- Prepare an analysis of the area including entry points, destination/activity areas, touring bases, and tourism zones.
- Formulate an overall tourism strategy with aims (or objectives) and target markets.
- Formulate a local strategy within the framework of the tourism strategy.
- Determine priority actions and projects and key projects.
- Specify steps for implementation of the plan.

After analyzing the different resources of the region, setting objectives, and identifying the priority projects to be implemented, a descriptive inventory was prepared,

and seven popular attractions, based on the amount of visits, were identified. Figure 24a. shows the existing situation of the region.

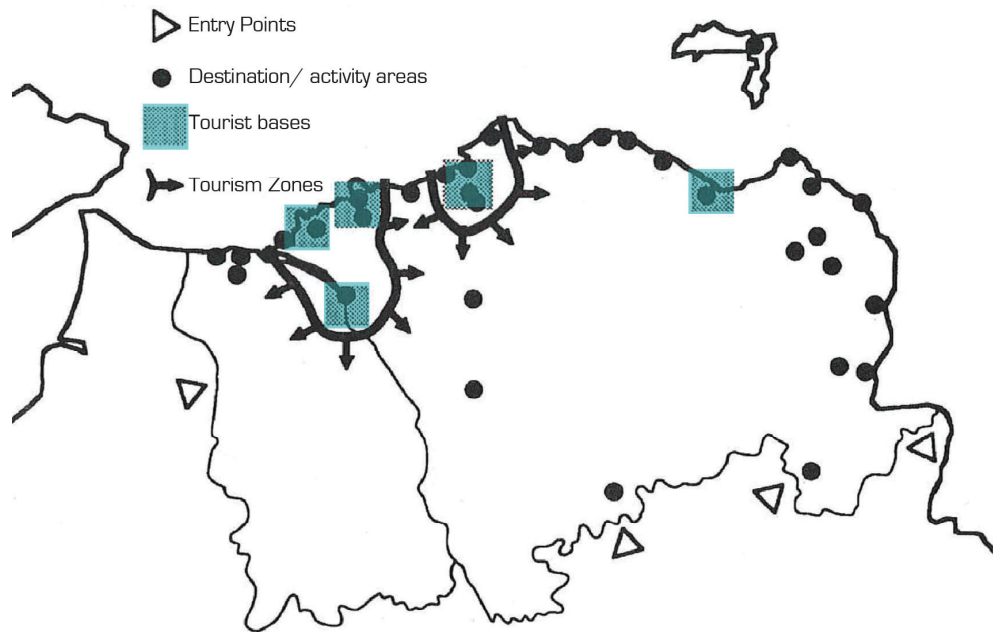


Figure 24a. Existing situation of the northeast area of Northern Ireland (Inkseep, 1991).

The plan developed a local strategy depicted in the Figure 24b. As part of this strategy a set of recommendations were also proposed. These are as follows:

- Continued enhancement of destination/activity areas and their integration within a system of tourist roads;
- Continued enhancement of tourist bases, including development of better hotel and self-catering accommodation;
- Extension of tourism zone 1 and its attributes westwards;
- Encouragement of tourism development to create two new tourism zones;

- Establishment of formal entry point facilities at four places;
- Promotion of zone 5 as a tourism resource; and
- Encouragement of measures that actively support tourism as an economic activity in other rural areas (zone 6)

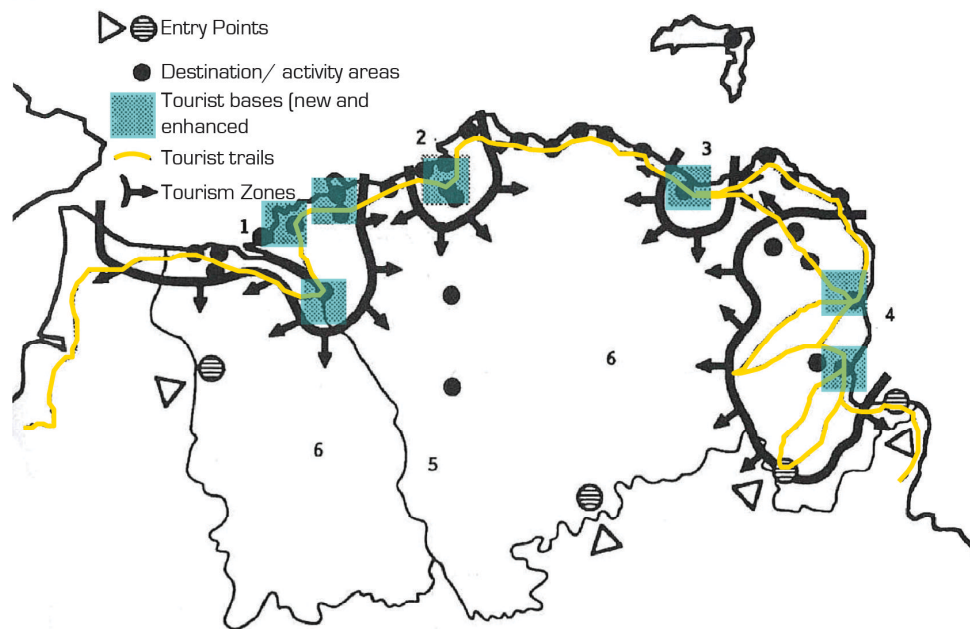


Figure 24b. Local strategy of the northeast area of Northern Ireland (Inksee, 1991).

Applicability of the Tourism Development Plan for the Northeast Area of Northern Ireland Case Study to the Puerto Plata Tourism Planning Initiative

The northeast area of the Northern Ireland, with a declining tourism market and a well-developed tourism area, serves as an example of a region that needed to rejuvenate its tourism industry. Specific actions and projects were identified in the Tourism Development Plan. As a result, a 15-year plan period was developed in order to specify

the key projects to be prioritized, and the different economic benefits that the plan would bring to the economic sphere of the region.

The similar issues shared within the Northern Ireland region and the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa are: (1) a substantial decline in the tourism industry, (2) the lack of integration of the existing roads that link to the different attractions to the region (in the case of Puerto Plata the lack of tertiary roads that connect the national parks, and the historical sites with the primary roads), and (3) the lack of promotion of the existing areas, and the development of these as future tourist assets. On the other hand, the similar strengths that both sites share are (1) the well-established tourism area, (2) the outstanding landscape scenery (national parks in Puerto Plata and forest parks in Northern Ireland) and coastal resources, and (3) the good access to major airports and roads.

The strategy developed by the Tourism Development Plan was to analyze key destination areas of cultural, archaeological, and historical value in the Northeast Area of Northern Ireland. After such analysis was developed, a set of recommendations was proposed for the future tourism planning development of the region.

Because of the similarities shared within the Northeast Area of Northern Ireland and the region of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, the process followed in the Northern Ireland local strategy provides a good framework for analyzing the existing resources of the region that can be developed for tourism purposes. The Northern Ireland plan is also valuable because it encompasses a good structure for the elaboration of

recommendations for the future tourism development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

Tourism Planning and Development in Bhutan

Located in the eastern Himalaya Mountains, the state of Bhutan is well known for its landscape scenery, and a Buddhist cultural model expressed by astonishing architecture represented in monasteries and palaces. A good example a highly controlled and adventure-oriented tourism, development in Bhutan is planned and staged with much involvement of the government and religious leaders (Inskeep, 1991).

Initially the major objectives of the tourism development entities in Bhutan were to generate revenue especially in foreign exchange, to expose the traditions and culture of the state internationally, and to help the economic and social development of the country (1974 est.). However, the country's authorities were aware that with an uncontrolled flow of tourists entering the region, socio-cultural and environmental problems would eventually arise as well.

In 1986, a tourism development plan for the kingdom of Bhutan was completed and adopted. In the plan three main zones are identified as potential tourism development areas within the state: the Himalayan zone, the central zone, and the southern foothills. Each of the zones had a specific tourist target; the Himalayan zone was meant to be dedicated for mountaineering and high altitude trekking; the central zone was targeted for cultural tours; and the southern foothills was intended to serve for wildlife tourism and Indian winter tourism (Inskeep, 1991).

The development plan included a strategy focused into the future expansion around the cores of the main zones of tourism development. The strategy encompassed a phasing plan as well; these phases were:

- Short-term (1986-1990): improving standards of tourist facilities (see figure 25a.)

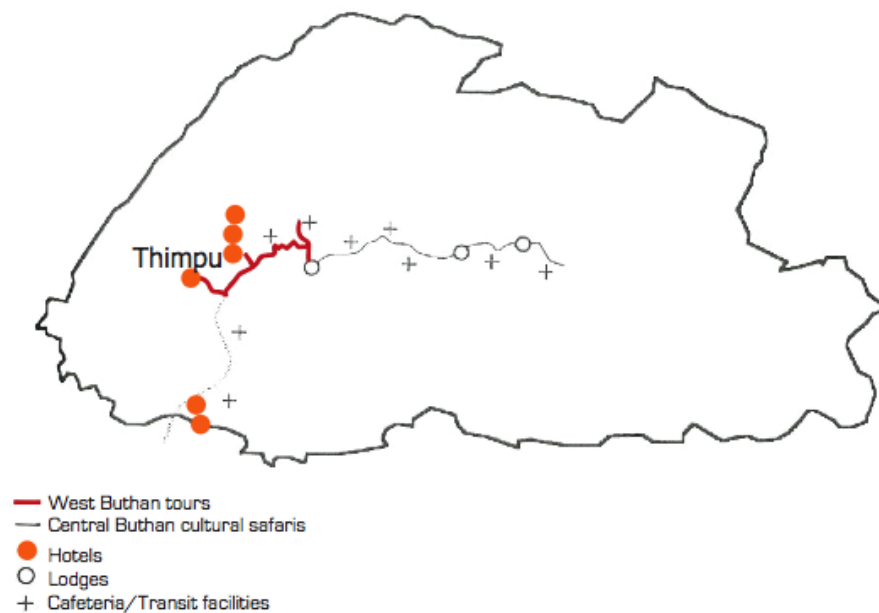


Figure 25a. Tourism development plan for Bhutan: short-term tour facilities (Inskeep, 1991).

- Medium-term (1991-1995): expansion of tourism in the central region with development of new facilities and infrastructure. Start cultural safari tourism in the eastern area of the state (see figure 25b.).
- Long-term (1995-): expansion of tourism development in the central and western region of the state. Development of wildlife tourism in the southern region (see figure 25c).

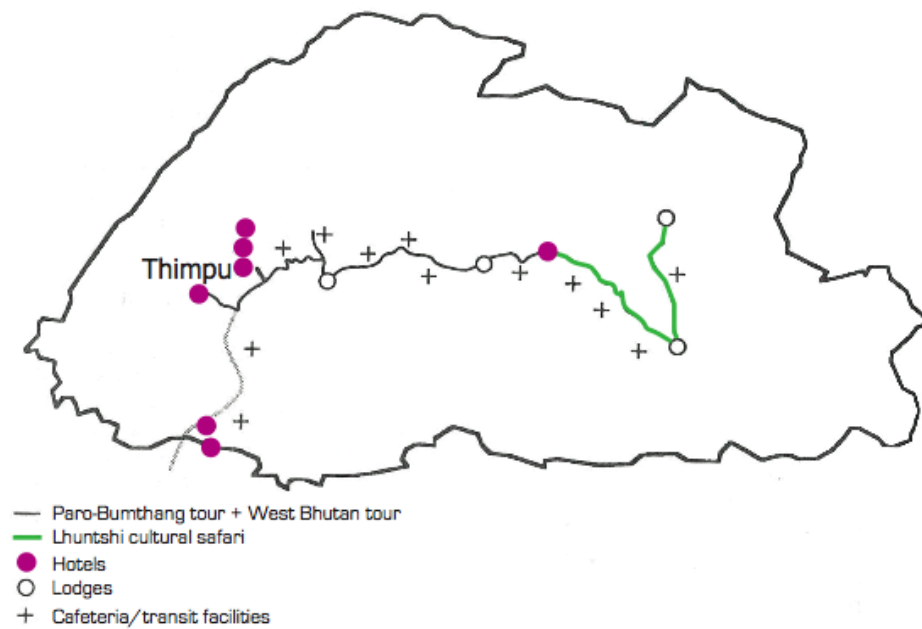


Figure 25b. Tourism development plan for Bhutan: medium-term tour facilities (Inskeep, 1991).

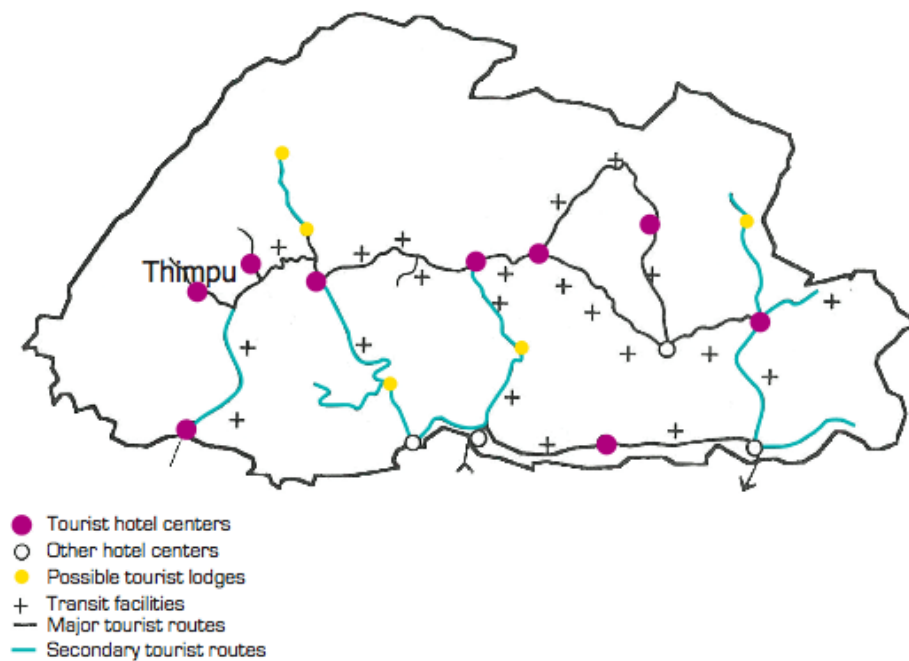


Figure 25c. Tourism development plan for Bhutan: long-term tour facilities (Inskeep, 1991).

Applicability of the Tourism Planning and Development in Bhutan Case Study to the Puerto Plata Tourism Planning Initiative

Traditional architectural design and motifs, and the building materials based on the cultural heritage of Bhutan became important elements of the Tourism Plan in Bhutan. The existing architectural typology was reinforced in order to maintain the existing character of the state of Bhutan, and also for the new development not to be disconnected with the surrounding natural environment of the country.

This special interest tourism plan for the country of Bhutan represents an important precedent for the tourism plan initiative of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa since both regions share distinct natural and cultural resources. In Bhutan's tourism plan three distinct zones of tourism were identified and developed, and a policy of controlled tourism that would gradually allow new areas for infrastructure development was proposed as well. A similar framework should be utilized in the development of the plan for the towns of Puerto Plata. This would guarantee a controlled tourism development focused on the preservation of the ecological features, and the conservation of the existing historical heritage of the region.

Planning for tourist attractions: National Tourism Plan in Burma

Burma, a sovereign state situated in southern Asia has a population that exceeds the 60 million people (2012 est.). With great tourist potential and attractions, Burma had an undeveloped tourism industry. Planning initiatives were conducted at the beginning of

the 1980s with the purpose of encouraging tourism as an economic development tool that will help promote the country internationally.

Plan Structure

Recognition and evaluation of the existing tourist attractions of Burma were carried out for the national tourism development-planning project (see figure 26).

Based in the previous analysis of the area, secondary attractions were also identified and classified. These are as follows:

- Proposed national parks: During the tourism plan preparation period a park planning project was underway.
- Natural areas with conservation and recreation value.
- Major outdoor recreation areas.
- Hot springs with resort development potential.
- Beaches with recreation and resort development potential.
- Underwater coral gardens.
- Caves and waterfalls.
- Exceptional scenic views.

Archaeological and historic sites

- Outstanding religious places
- Interesting urban and village environments.
- Major festivals and special events.
- Museums.

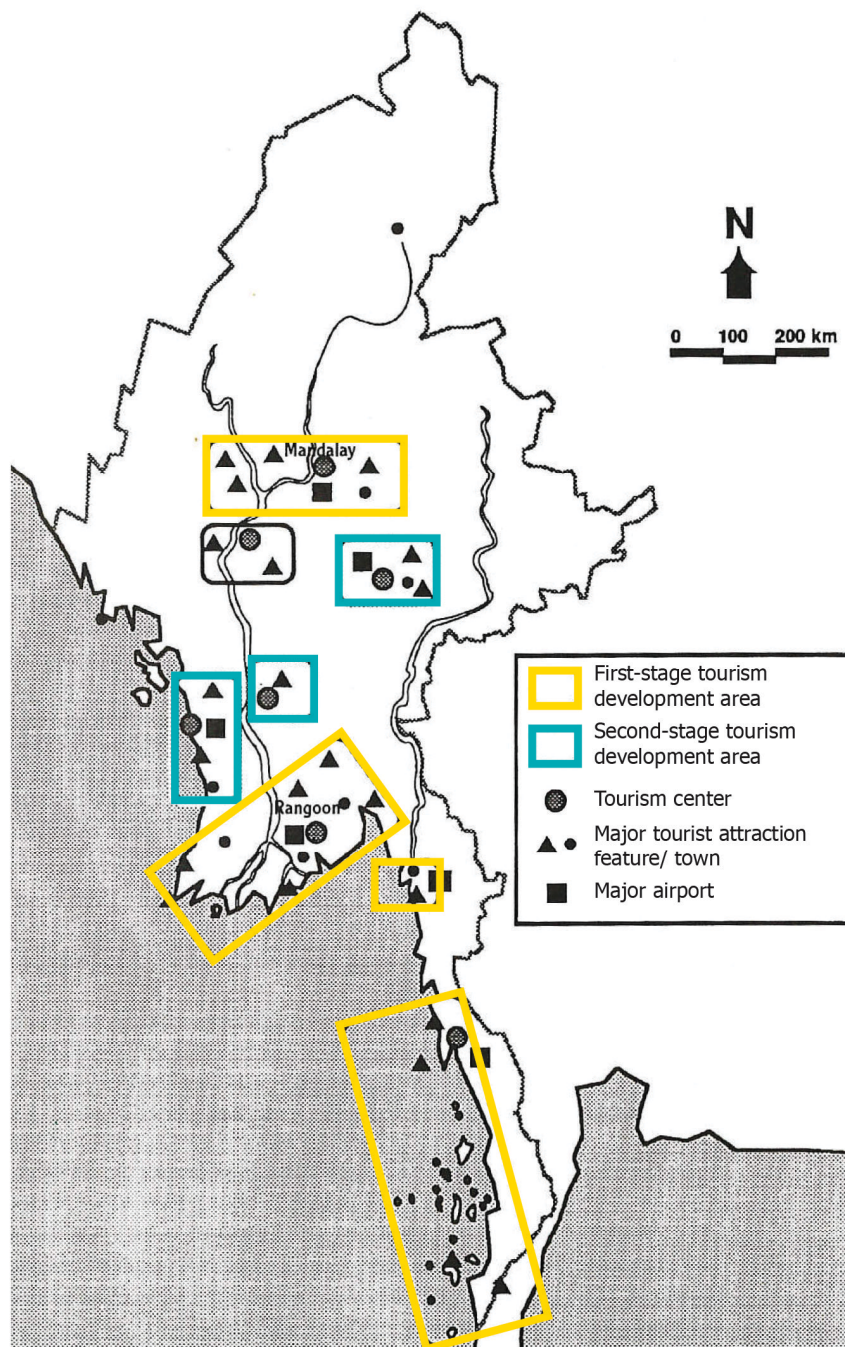


Figure 26. Burma tourism development plan: development regions (Inskeep, 1991)

- Handicraft production centers.
- Cultural performance facilities.
- Special features (botanical and zoological gardens, aquariums, cemeteries, and memorials)
- Golf courses

Both international and domestic tourism impacts were also examined, and a feasibility analysis was conducted as part of the first phase of the tourism plan. The second phase of the national tourism development-planning project was completed in the year of 1988, and it encompassed a detail conservation plan for the different historical and archaeological sites of Burma, and a feasibility analysis for the existing hotel infrastructures of the state. The government implemented both phases of the tourism plan of Burma, and a series of recommendations were derived after this implementation phase.

The relatively low cost of traveling, compared to other similar Asian destinations, was one of the main advantages of the state of Burma; however, safety concerns existed in some vital parts of the country, and these concerns affected the tourist influence in some areas of the state of Burma.

Applicability of Burma's Tourism Development Plan Case Study of Burma to the Puerto Plata Tourism Planning Initiative

The national tourism plan of Burma represents a development plan for a country with highly interesting cultural and natural attractions. The overall final approach of the plan was to gradually expand the tourism market while keeping a balance in the development of the infrastructures and giving special consideration to the surrounding

environment. The specifics of the national tourism plan included land use zoning, environmental improvements, recommendations for controlled visitor use of the site, and ways in which the nearby tourism could be promoted (Inskeep, 1991).

The Burma Tourism Development Plan particularly focuses in a strategic planning that involves different stages of development. A strategic planning in the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa is critical for the future success of the tourism industry as efforts are made to utilize tourism as the main tool in the economic change of the region.

To properly create a strategy for the tourism planning framework of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, a phasing plan is proposed as part of this thesis based in the Burma Tourism Development Plan.

Planning for tourist attractions in Mongolia

Located in central Asia, the country of Mongolia had scattered tourism attractions and destinations, and also lacked good connectivity with the major surrounding tourism market countries (Inskeep, 1991). The long distances required for accessing the various tourist attractions and destinations, and the poor physical state of the road system were some of the main issues that the tourism plan had to address.

The rail system service, used mainly by the international tourists as a way of accessing the country, also needed to be incorporated in the new tourism plan development since this would significantly increase access to the different facilities and services of the country.

The main goal of the National Tourism Plan for Mongolia was the development of transportation infrastructures that could provide better access to the existing tourist attractions of the country. For this reason, several analyses of the existing transportation patterns and services were made in order to incorporate these to the existing and proposed tourist attractions and destinations (see figures 27a. and 27b.).

Another important element of the National Tourism Plan for Mongolia was to determine the country's better access in order to develop several air routes, which were vital for developing international tourism in the country (Inskeep, 1991).

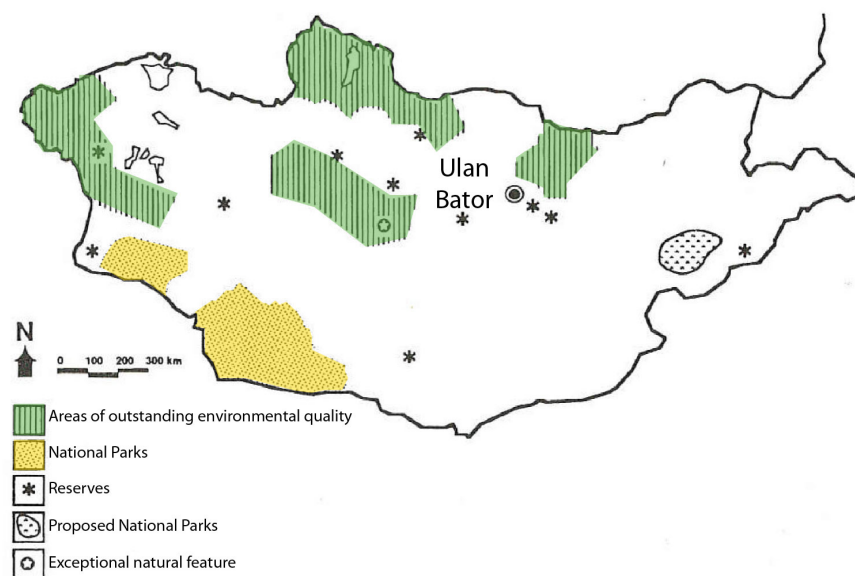


Figure 27a. Tourism plan for Mongolia: natural tourist attractions (Inskeep, 1991).

In Mongolia, the different tourism characteristics of the area helped determine the amount facilities required, the desirable traffic flow within these facilities, and the hierarchy of access to highways, major roads, and secondary roads (see figure 27c.).

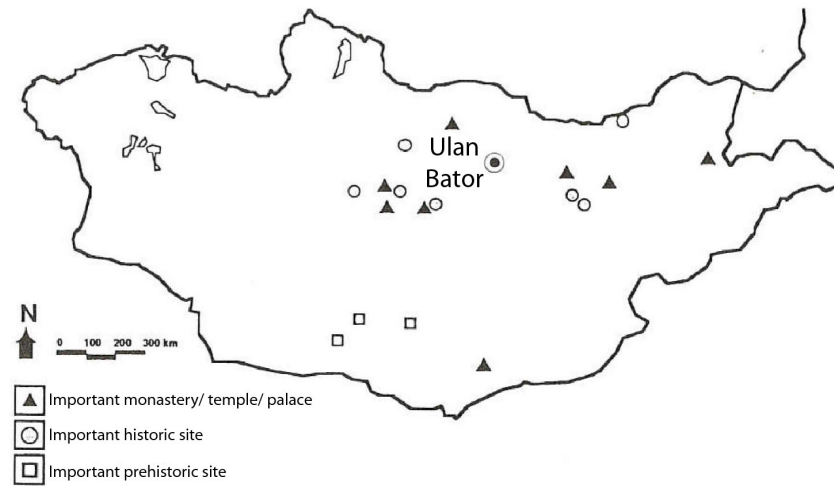


Figure 27.b. Tourism plan for Mongolia: cultural tourist attractions (Inskeep, 1991).

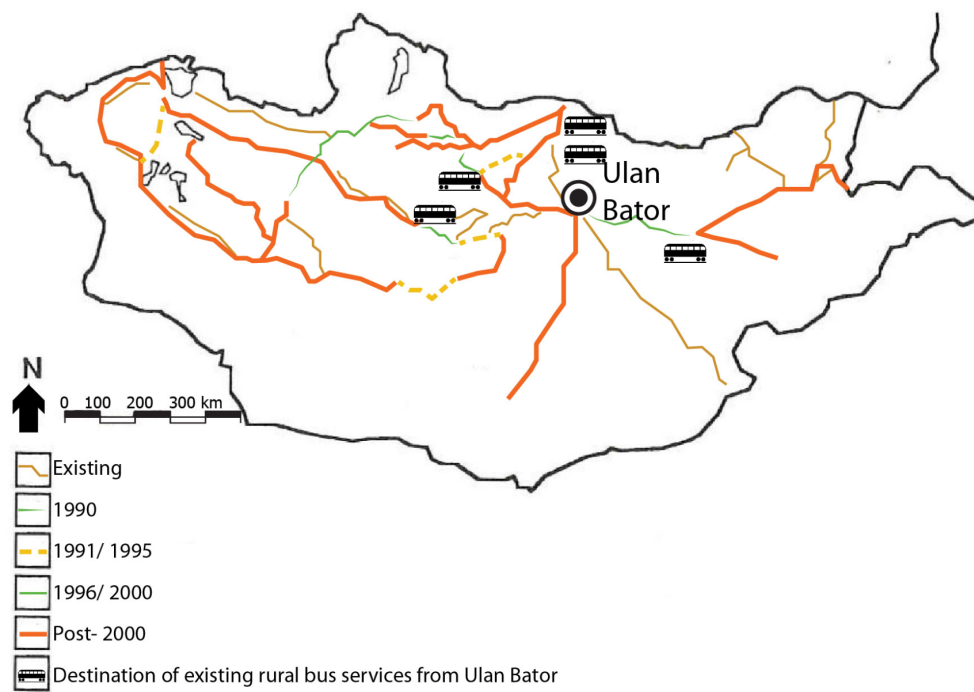


Figure 27c. Tourism plan for Mongolia: existing and proposed road communication system (Inskeep, 1991).

Applicability of the National Tourism Plan for Mongolia case study to the Puerto Plata tourism planning initiative

Adequate infrastructure is essential for the successful development of tourism especially in the developing world because of the limited infrastructures that these countries frequently have (Heraty, 1989). Transportation infrastructure, a vital component of the tourism planning of a region, helps in accommodating, in an integrated way, the various road touring facilities such as shopping areas, fuel stations, restaurants, and recreation facilities.

The National Tourism Plan for Mongolia showcases the development of a transportation plan that helped in increasing the access to the diverse cultural and historical sites of Mongolia. The idea of incorporating a new route that connects the different attractions of both San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa would considerably increase access to the various historical and cultural sites of importance of these municipalities. The improvement of the existing road infrastructure between the municipalities would also be beneficial for the future tourism development of the region.

CHAPTER V

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

After reviewing relevant tourism and regional planning literature, and analyzing the data that emerged from the six case studies previously described, the outcome of the concept development of this thesis is a tourism planning framework that encompasses three regional plan proposals as well as a series of specific actions and recommendations to be implemented in the future tourism planning of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

The overall concept development of this thesis encompasses various processes. Within these processes the components of a tourism plan developed by Edward Inskeep (1991), which are previously described in the literature of this thesis, supported the tourism planning framework because these provide an outline of the different aspects and elements that ought to be considered for the formulation of a tourism plan. Within the components established by Inskeep the transportation infrastructure and the tourist attractions were the aspects encompassed in this thesis' tourism planning framework. The author also incorporates the environmental and the policy-making aspects of tourism development into the tourism planning framework of this thesis.

The concept development of this thesis is also supported by the tourism planning recommendations of the book *Rethinking the Sociology of Tourism* (Cohen, 1979), which acknowledges that the tourism research should be (1) contextual, which analyzes the prevailing economic, political, ecological, and socio-cultural circumstances of the context. The site inventory and analysis of the sub-regional context, the province, and

the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa support this contextual research; (2) processual: focused in the case study evaluation, which is supported by the case study research previously developed in the methodology section of this thesis; and, (3) comparative, which links the findings of the case studies with the context.

The first component of Cohen's tourism research framework, the contextual analysis of this thesis defined five aspects as critical for the future tourism planning development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. These aspects are (1) environmental preservation; (2) government involvement; (3) heritage and historical conservation; (4) transportation planning; and (5) phasing.

The second component of the concept development, the processual analysis, paired each of the case study previously described in the methodology with the development aspect that best suited the context of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa (see figures 28 and 29).

The third component of the concept development, the comparative analysis, focused in the specific key actions of each of the case studies that needed to be included as part of the future tourism planning framework of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. These key actions are encompassed in the recommendations section of the concept development chapter of this thesis. These recommendations are proposed for the larger scale issues of the region.





























 Developed  Partly Developed N/A = Not Applicable	St. Lucia	Malta	Northern Ireland	Bhutan	Myanmar	Mongolia
Environmental Preservation						
Government Involvement						
Heritage and Historical Conservation						
Transportation Planning	N/A	N/A			N/A	
Phasing	N/A					

Figure 28. Case study evaluation (graphic developed by the author)

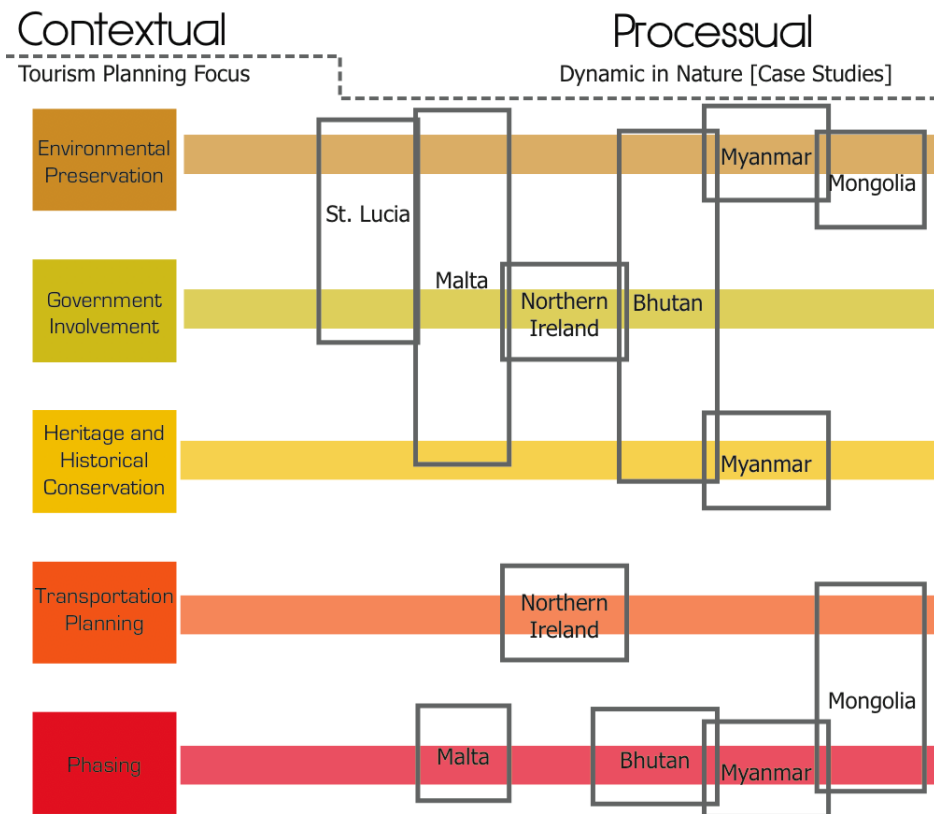


Figure 29. Processual analysis (graphic developed by the author).

Tourism Planning Framework

As described previously, the concept development of this thesis is supported by contextual, processual, and comparative components. Based on the findings of these analyses this thesis developed a regional plan proposal that is represented in a critical development plan, a phasing plan, and a specific project development plan.

The planning proposals developed for the city of San Felipe de Puerto Plata (CONAU, 2000), as well as the research and analysis of the sub-region, the province and the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa developed in this thesis, were the two main sources that supported the development of the critical development plan, the phasing plan, and the specific project development plan proposed in the tourism planning framework of this thesis.

The critical development plan portrays critical areas where development should occur (see figure 30). The plan focuses in seven development aspects which are: (1) road improvement, (2) heritage and historical conservation, (3) tourism development zone improvement, (4) infrastructure revitalization, (5) environmental preservation, (6) future small-scale tourism development zone, and (7) community revitalization areas.

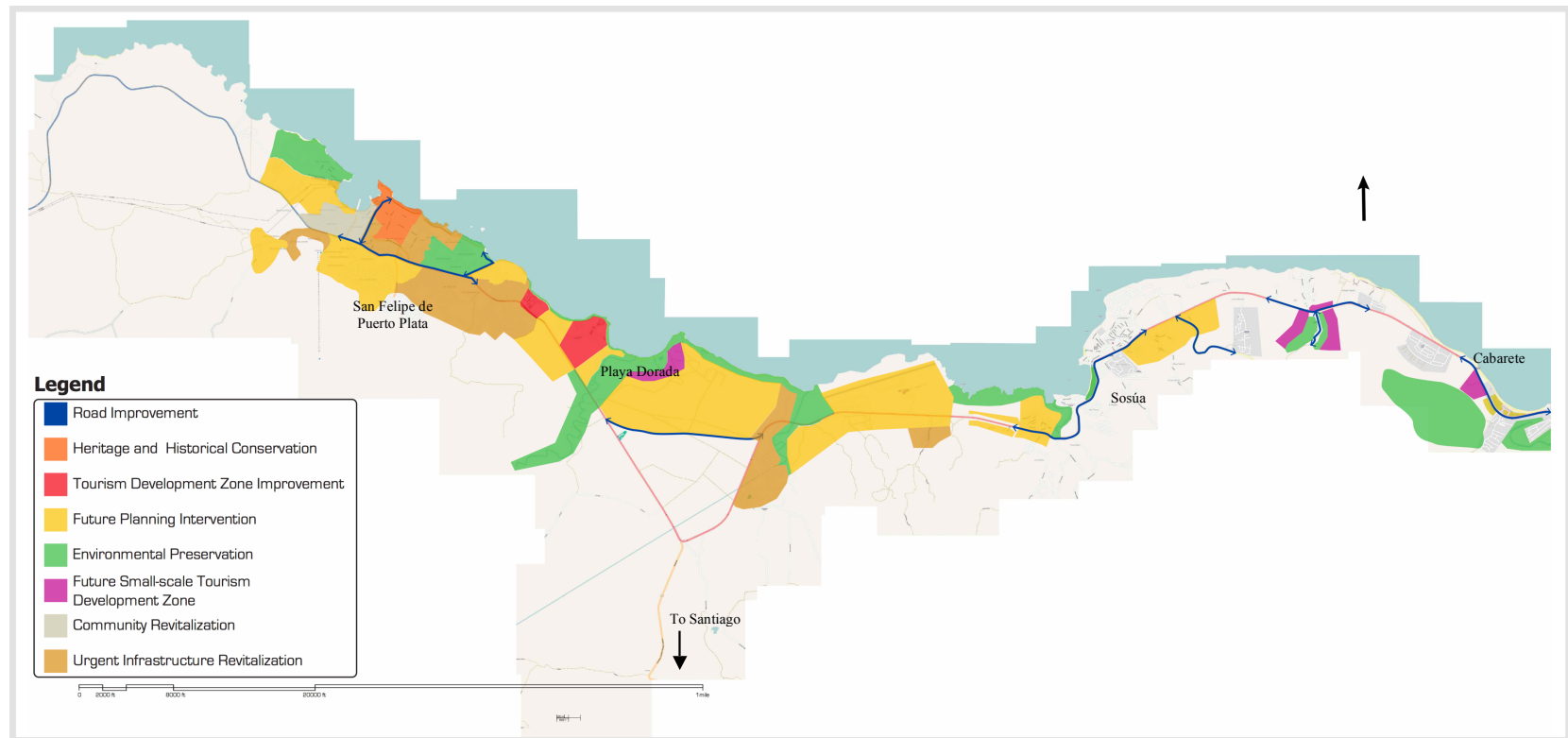


Figure 30. Critical development plan (graphic developed by the author).

The phasing plan prioritizes the implementation of the areas established in the critical development plan. The phasing plan also includes the level of involvement of the public and the private sector entities (see figure 31).

The phasing plan is supported by the planning proposal for the city of San Felipe de Puerto Plata developed by the CONAU (2000), hence the development priority is established for this area first (phases 1 and 2). Phases 3 and 4 encompass the municipality of Sosúa, focusing in the future planning intervention, which relates to the future planning intervention zones designated for the future tourism-related business, as well as new housing and civic developments. The phasing plan also prioritizes the zones of critical environmental preservation, as well as the zones destined for future small-scale tourism development.

The specific project development plan proposes the specific areas where the town centers and/or civic centers, the small-scale tourism projects, and new road infrastructure should be developed within the critical development plan (see figure 32).

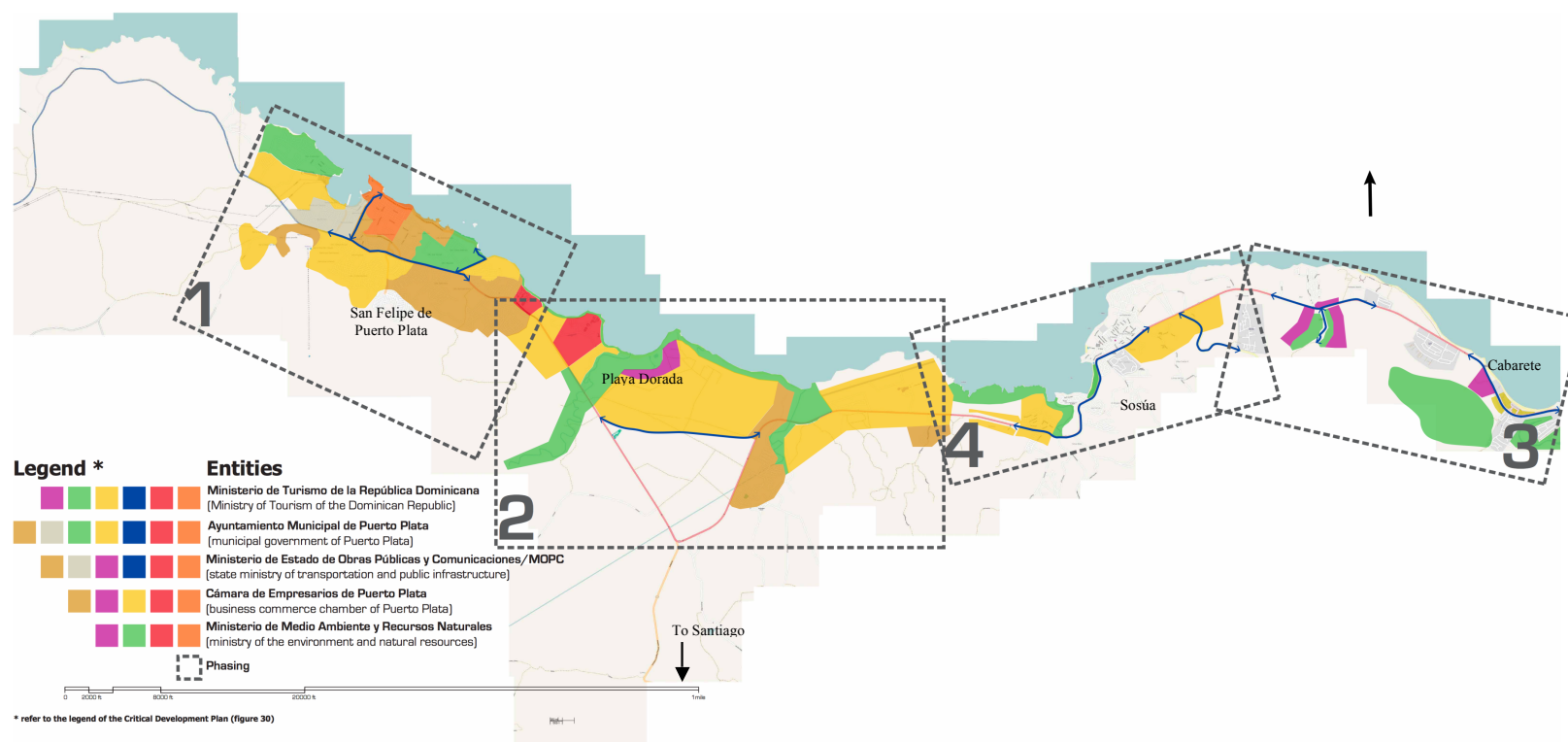


Figure 31. Phasing plan (graphic developed by the author).

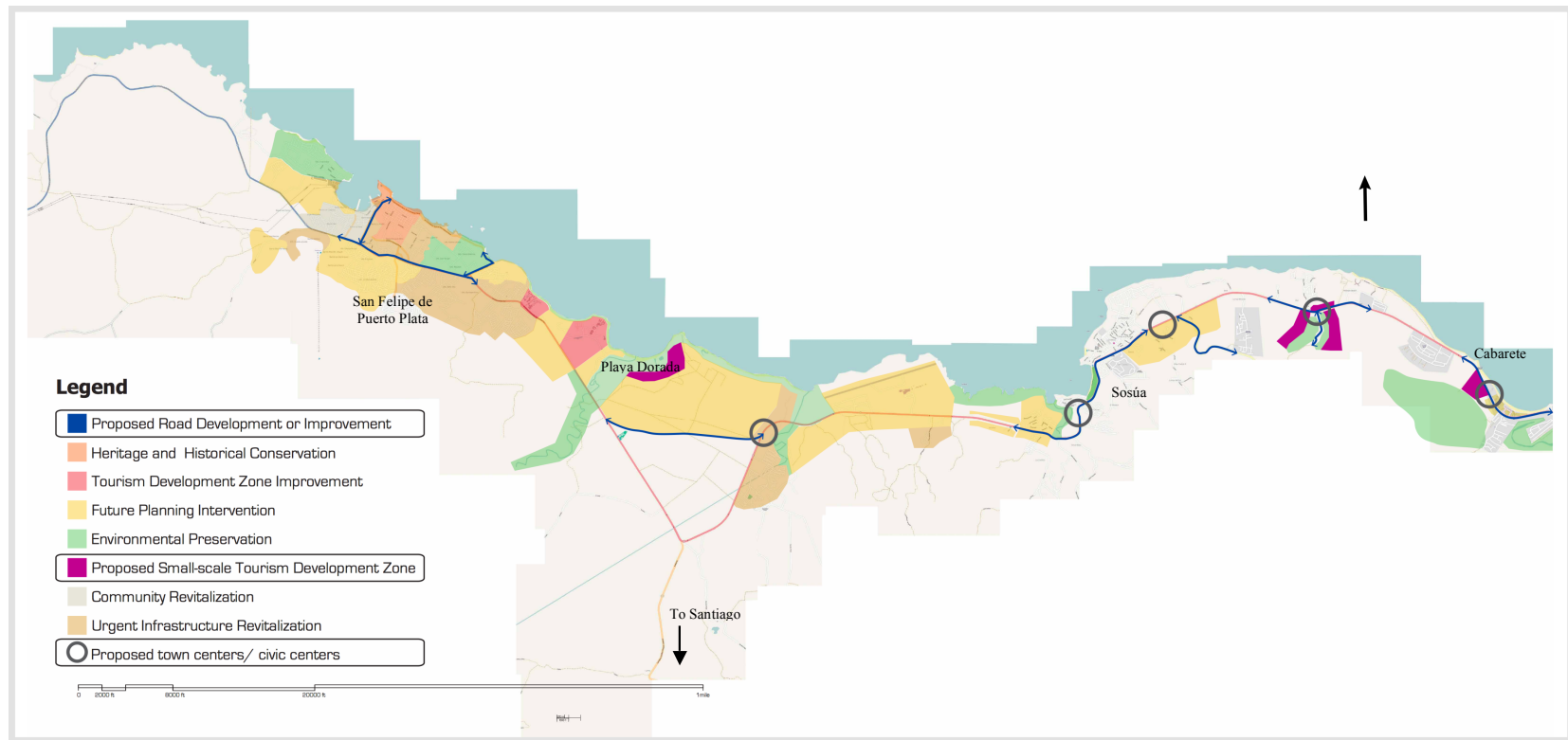


Figure 32. Specific project development plan (graphic developed by the author).

Recommendations

As part of the tourism framework of this thesis, a series of recommendations were proposed for the public and private sector entities that could potentially help in the future tourism development of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

In formulating these recommendations, and selecting the entities that could help improve the tourism development of the region, the author utilized the suggestions of the document *Lineamientos de Políticas de Desarrollo Urbano Para la Ciudad de Puerto Plata* developed by the CONAU, as well as the suggestions from the document *Community-Based Tourism Development in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic: A Retrospective*. The suggestions provided in these documents, together with all the information obtained from this thesis' research, helped in developing the recommendations that need to be implemented in the region, as well as the entities that should be involved for these recommendations to take effect.

The public and private sector entities considered to be vital for the future tourism development of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa proposed in this thesis are the (1) Ministerio de Turismo de la República Dominicana (Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic), (2) Ayuntamiento Municipal de Puerto Plata (municipal government of Puerto Plata), (3) Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC (state ministry of transportation and public infrastructure), (4) Cámara de Empresarios de Puerto Plata (business commerce chamber of Puerto Plata), and (5) Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (ministry of the environment and natural resources).

The recommendations proposed are encompassed into four main categories:

1. Sustainability: focused in the reduction of the impact of the built environment, and the rehabilitation of the existing natural resources of the region. The recommendations are supported by the sustainability principles previously defined in the literature of this thesis.
2. Conservation: focused in the protection of the existing historic sites, and in the rehabilitation of the prevailing cultural heritage of the region.
3. Revitalization: focused in the recovery of the existing housing, and transportation infrastructures as well as the open space areas of the region.
4. Accessibility: focused in maximizing the connectivity between the different development areas of the region.

Sustainability

Entities involved:

Ministerio de Turismo de la República Dominicana, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Puerto Plata, Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC, Cámara de Empresarios de Puerto Plata, and the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales.

Recommendations:

- To rehabilitate the river systems of the region: To develop a reforestation strategy to recover the San Marcos river and its tributaries
- To rehabilitate the coastal zones of Sosúa Beach, Playa Dorada, Costa Dorada and Cabarete.

- To define the communities' physical boundaries in order to control the existing sprawl that is growing towards the fragile ecological ecosystems of the region.
- To identify and control the pollutant agents of the region. To create regulatory policies for the improvement of the existing environmental resources of the region.
- To shift to a low-density tourism infrastructures in the future planning intervention, and the future small-scale tourism development zones that are proposed in the critical development plan. As described in the literature review of this thesis, the low-density tourism planning causes less environmental stress in the region, and encourage the involvement of the local communities.

Conservation

Entities involved:

Ministerio de Turismo de la República Dominicana, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Puerto Plata, and the Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC.

Recommendations:

- To develop a cultural program in the future tourism development of the region that includes the existing historical sites, as well as the ecological systems of the province of Puerto Plata.
- To rehabilitate the historic district of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and to revitalize the existing Victorian, and vernacular structures for these are vital structures of the historical heritage of the region.

- To restore and/or repurpose the structures surrounding the port such as the 1879 cast-iron lighthouse, the Puerto Plata malecón (Puerto Plata seafront), and the fort of San Felipe.
- To develop a system of civic and cultural centers throughout the region. These centers will help in promoting the existing historical resources of the region, and the cultural traditions of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa

Revitalization

Entities involved:

Ministerio de Turismo de la República Dominicana, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Puerto Plata, Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC, the Cámara de Empresarios de Puerto Plata, and the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales.

Recommendations:

- To restructure the existing transportation infrastructure of the historic district of San Felipe de Puerto Plata.
- To regenerate the existing housing infrastructures located near critical environmental systems (rivers, coastal zones, and mangroves).
- To revitalize the existing national parks and scientific reserves of the region.
- To rehabilitate the open space recreational systems of the different communities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. To plan for the future inclusion of open space areas, town parks, and boulevards within the towns.

- To rehabilitate the existing port infrastructure for it to be part of the future tourism development plan.

Accessibility

Entities involved:

Ministerio de Turismo de la República Dominicana, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Puerto Plata, and the Ministerio de Estado de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones/MOPC.

Recommendations:

- To rehabilitate the International Airport Gregorio Luperón, and to develop better connectivity between the airport and the tourism destinations of the region.
- To restructure the existing transportation infrastructure, and to define better transportation systems for the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.
- To plan and develop affordable both private and state-based transportation systems that respond to the future tourism development of the towns.
- To plan for future transit-oriented developments in order to minimize the automobile dependency and to reduce the environmental pollution associated with it.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to provide a framework for the future tourism planning development of the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, both located in the province of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic. During the completion of this research various elements were found to be critical for the development of a tourism planning initiative for San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

As exemplified by the six case studies previously examined in the methodology of this thesis, one of the most critical components of a successful tourism plan is the integration of the decision-makers sectors of the region in the various stages of the tourism plan development. The participation of the sectors of the government, the non-profit organizations, the commercial enterprises, and the private sectors showed to be essential for any tourism plan to be able to produce concrete results.

Participatory planning processes in the province of Puerto Plata are still in a very early phase. This issue endorsed the need for great involvement among all the decision-makers sectors of the region in all stages of the plan development. For this reason, the different entities involved in the tourism development of the region were integrated as part of the framework of this thesis for they could potentially help in achieving the proposed recommendations.

Another critical component of a tourism plan is the proper development of the resources of the region. The natural, historical, and cultural resources of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa must be clearly identified, and properly developed by the decision

makers, the planners, and the locals of the region. The preservation of these resources is vital for the development of a successful tourism plan; hence the responsibility of maintaining the cultural heritage of the place, and the environmental, and social uniqueness. These considerations must become crucial at the early stages of the future tourism plan development of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

Limitations of the Research

Methodology Limitations

Although the qualitative research showed to be an appropriate methodology for this thesis, it is important to understand that the qualitative research based in case studies is limited by the understanding and integrity of the researcher. Because the researcher is in charge of the data collection and analysis, the research relies in the instincts and abilities of the researcher.

Case Selection limitations

While the selection of the case studies was context-based, and although these case studies represented successful manifestations of tourism plans, these plans, however, date from 1983 to 1991.

Location. Although the case studies examined in this thesis are focused in tourism plans developed in regions similar in size, and in similar historical and ecological scenarios as the ones of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, only the case study of the St. Lucia Tourism Development Plan, is developed in the Caribbean context.

Therefore, this thesis' tourism planning framework may perhaps not completely respond to the cultural aspects of the region of Puerto Plata. However, the information obtained from the different case studies cover a variety of issues similar to the context of Puerto Plata, which means that the information provided from these case studies is valid for the future tourism development of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa.

Implications of Future Research

Implementation

This thesis examined the potential for a future tourism planning initiative in the towns of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa. The research only reaches to certain level of development, and it does not address the implementation process that needs to be carried out for this proposed framework, such as the need of a participatory planning process, the phasing time, and the monetary resources needed to develop this type of planning.

The research, however, seeks to serve as a tool that could be further developed and utilized by the local communities of San Felipe de Puerto Plata and Sosúa, as well as the public and private sectors of the region, the province, and the country.

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APPENDIX

Appendix. Visitor Arrival Summary 2006 -2010

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Visitor Arrival Summary

Tourist Arrivals to the Dominican Republic grew moderately in 2010 by 3.3 percent to end with a total of 4,124.5 thousand. Of this total, 85.4 percent were Non-National arrivals. The Winter season arrivals increased by 2.3 percent, while the Summer season saw 3.9 percent more tourists visiting the destination. The only decline all year came in April which yielded 3.2 percent fewer Stay-overs.

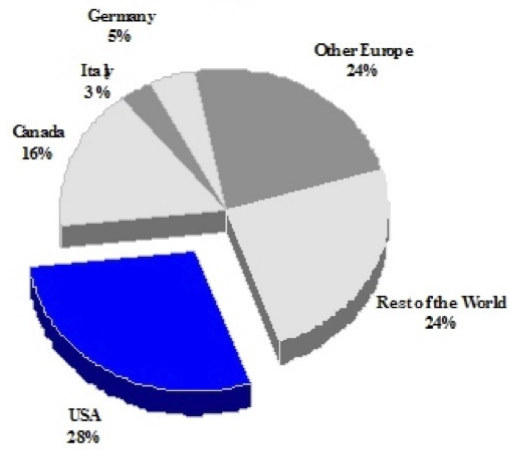
- ◆ The United States continued to be the most important source market for the Dominican Republic, with a near 30.0 percent share, and providing some 1,226.4 thousand arrivals. This total was an increase of 6.8 percent over the previous year or 77.8 thousand tourists. Arrivals from Canada increased slightly by 2.0 percent to end at just over 659.0 thousand. Europe, as a whole, provided 4.9 percent fewer tourists in 2010 (1,184.3 thousand) but the performances of the individual markets were mixed. Germany showed growth by a mere 1.4 percent while Italy suffered the biggest decline of 17.5 percent, lower levels of arrivals were also recorded from the United Kingdom (-7.2 percent) and Other Continental Europe (-3.9 percent). Stay-over arrivals coming from other parts of the world were up by approximately 11.0 percent.
- ◆ Cruise Passenger Arrival numbers slumped back to near the pre-2008 levels, being down by a significant 29.0 percent. Practically all months, with the exception of August, suffered declines in 2010 with nine months having doubled-digit drops. These contractions ranged from -18.9 percent to as much as -99.7 percent.

TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2010

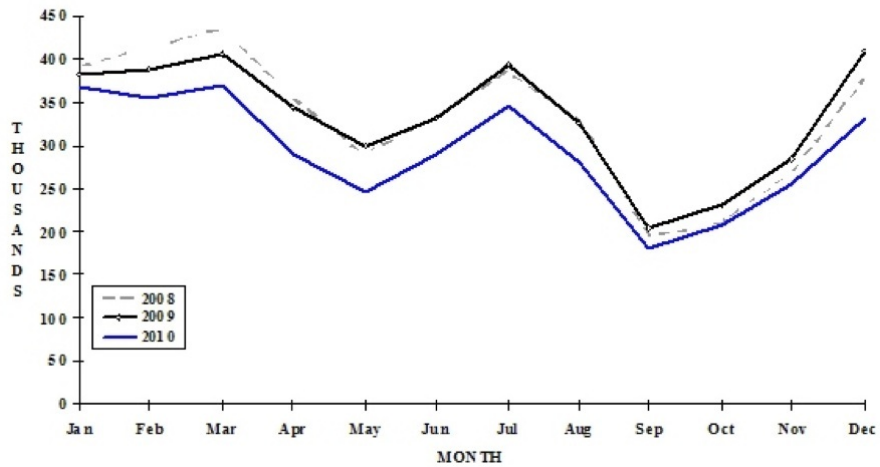
VISITOR ARRIVALS			
Tourist Air Arrivals →	4,124,543	Cruise Passengers	352,539
→ Summer	62.3%	→ Summer	36.9%
→ Winter	37.7%	→ Winter	63.1%
		Cruise ship calls	264
VISITOR PROFILE			
Average Length of Stay (nights)	9.2	Tourist Arrivals by Purpose of Visit ^{II}	
Tourist Arrivals by Place of Stay ^{II}		→ Holiday	95.1%
→ Hotels	77.7%	→ Business	3.4%
→ Other	22.3%	→ Other	1.5%
TOURISM AND OTHER RELATED ECONOMIC STATISTICS			
Visitor Expenditure (US\$ millions)	\$4,209.1	GDP at Factor Cost (US\$ millions)	\$51,657.6
Consumer Price Index (% ch. 2010/'09)	5.9%	Hotel & Restaurant contribution to GDP ^{VII}	8.0%
ACCOMMODATION STATISTICS		SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATISTICS	
Rooms	66,968	Land Area (square Kilometres)	48,442
Room Occupancy Rates	66.6%	Population (thousand mid year 2010)	9,974.0

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TOURIST ARRIVALS BY MAIN MARKETS
2010



MONTHLY TOURIST ARRIVALS



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TOURIST AIR ARRIVALS BY NATIONALITY

Nationality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Non-Nationals	3342106	3398374	3447730	3415616	3521110
Dominicans*	622949	581208	531942	576687	603433
TOTAL	3965055	3979582	3979672	3992303	4124543

*Dominican nationals resident overseas.

VISITOR ARRIVALS* BY MODE OF ARRIVAL

Mode of Arrival	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Air	3965055	3979582	3979672	3992303	4124543
Sea*	303489	384878	475206	496728	352539
TOTAL	4268544	4364460	4454878	4489031	4477082

*Includes Cruise passenger arrivals

FOREIGN VISITOR AIR ARRIVALS BY NATIONALITY

Country of Residence	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	%Share 2010
U.S.A	1092317	1080066	1091813	1148533	1226367	29.7
Canada	509323	587370	634937	646285	659063	16.0
Italy	144115	146808	133319	121317	100052	2.4
Germany	226737	217279	207893	179180	181682	4.4
United Kingdom	242559	225157	216130	183186	169919	4.1
Other Europe	812511	798232	795888	762242	732616	17.8
Other	937493	924670	899692	951560	1054844	25.6
TOTAL	3965055	3979582	3979672	3992303	4124543	100.0

FOREIGN VISITOR AIR ARRIVALS

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2010/09
January	356247	375933	391310	382055	404264	5.8
February	367698	372966	413841	387487	395779	2.1
March	393014	412684	435779	406270	421829	3.8
April	371953	348758	353782	342398	331521	-3.2
May	280738	267762	289402	298374	297019	-0.5
June	336738	328028	331871	331373	348375	5.1
July	420265	400960	386690	393452	417699	6.2
August	335081	336304	329636	325863	333110	2.2
September	210695	215913	194248	204522	219292	7.2
October	223449	234704	209616	229388	247254	7.8
November	281308	284969	268469	284824	297036	4.3
December	387869	400601	375028	408297	411365	0.8
TOTAL	3965055	3979582	3979672	3994303	4124543	3.3

* Including Dominican nationals resident overseas,

MONTHLY CRUISE ARRIVALS

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2010/09
January	47014	50656	82859	102007	66863	-34.5
February	54168	57243	89890	86764	55700	-35.8
March	56989	64072	76975	101552	80135	-21.1
April	29186	42620	47950	53456	19757	-63.0
May	10650	13307	15953	9070	6659	-26.6
June	7183	15715	15660	7210	0	-
July	14961	14377	13145	9815	5174	-47.3
August	8226	8849	6491	4410	5214	18.2
September	3613	4832	2206	3632	11	-99.7
October	4241	10972	5580	19287	15644	-18.9
November	20065	31779	28548	41343	40386	-2.3
December	47193	70456	89949	58183	56996	-2.0
TOTAL	303489	384878	475206	496729	352539	-29.0

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION (Rooms)

Rooms	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Hotels	n.a	56555	n.a	n.a	n.a
Apartments	n.a	376	n.a	n.a	n.a
Villas/Cottages	n.a	610	n.a	n.a	n.a
Other	n.a	2329	n.a	n.a	n.a
TOTAL	59082	59870	63206	64898	66166

* Preliminary

**Source: Banco Central de la Republica Dominicana

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